CHARITY in all its Branches:

OR, A

COLLECTION

OF THE

RULES of SCRIPTURE

THAT

Teach Men to *Love Mercy.*

SHEWING

The Excellence of Charity: Its Deſcription in 1 *Cor.* xiii. Its Conduct with reſpect to Sins: Its allowing for Differences in Religion: Its relieving Wants: And, that which makes it perfect, Love to Enemies.

Samuel Wright. D.D.

What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him ſhall he teach in the way that he ſhall chooſe: His ſoul ſhall lodge in goodneſs.

Pſal. xxv. 12, 13. Hebr.

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CHARITY in all its Branches:

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Rules of Scripture

Teach Men to Live by Mercy.

PREFACE.

AFTER I had publiſhed the Scripture Account of the *Human Virtues*, or *Self-Duties*, as I find ſome rather chooſe to ſpeak; I was obliged, for particular reaſons, to print the Rules of *Juſtice* by themſelves. In the ſame manner, it is now requiſite to draw up the account of *Charity* in a Treatiſe by it ſelf. Only here I have taken the liberty to enlarge more on *ſome Texts* that are recited, becauſe it is thought, this may ſerve to quicken the *attention* of common Readers to the rules laid down, and will better direct the *application* of them. Yet theſe enlargements are ſo manag'd, as to anſwer (I hope) the expectations of ſuch, who look upon

on every Virtue to be moſt ſafely and moſt perfectly deſcribed, by keeping to the *Scripture Account* of it.

I chooſe to purſue this method, becauſe it ſtill appears to me, as well as ſome others, the *beſt* way of making men truly virtuous. In my own mind, I am perſuaded it is the *only* way. This brings the laws and rules of every Virtue into the moſt complete and deſirable compaſs, and it ſets them in their cleareſt light.

Men may write of the certainty of *moral Science* in what ways they pleaſe; but they will never attain to any *certainty*, unleſs they make the foundation and rule of it the Nature and Will of GOD. In whoſe eternal mind the model of all things lay before they were created; and by his unerring Reaſon and infinite Wiſdom, their different natures and relations were ordered, together with the laws by which every ſpecies

and

and rank of Beings ſhould be governed.

The labour'd Eſſays that have been publiſh'd of late, to diſtinguiſh betwixt the reaſon and fitneſs of things, and the Will of GOD, have rather ſerved the purpoſes of Vice, and ſtrengthened many in their Corruptions, than produced any *real Reformations*. The reaſon and fitneſs of things is the Will of GOD; ſo he formed them, ſo he placed them in their relation to each other. And the Will of GOD is moſt certainly and perpetually *the ſame*, according to the continued truth and nature of things. Whatever accuracy any Writer may ſhew in abſtracted reaſonings about theſe points, yet, I preſume, it will ever be found hurtful to the cauſe of virtue, to teach men to *ſeparate* them.

This hath made many, upon pretence of following the *nature* of things, ſlight and blaſpheme the revealed

vealed Will of God; and it hath made others greatly pervert the Scriptures, by explaining them according to their frail and pre-conceived notions of the *reaſon of things*, inſtead of allowing that ſacred book to guide their reaſon, and to be its *own interpreter*. Whatever employs the mind ſo as to weaken its attention to the Will of God, and its deſires to be conformed thereto, diſgraceth *Virtue* inſtead of rendering it amiable. Its attractive force is hindered, by ſeparating it from its *perfect Original*; and the power to practiſe it is loſt, for want of that *life* and *vigor* which He alone can communicate.

Men may exhauſt all their learning and eloquence, in diſplaying the charms of Benevolence and Affection; but they will never *convey* that ſacred fire into the breaſt, nor guide and enlarge the *generous inſtinct* from whence all thoſe charms ariſe, while they carry men off from the ſource

of

all goodneſs, from the *Father* of lights and mercies. I muſt add, that never will they attain to the right and continued practice of *univerſal Love*, without the aſſiſtance of the SPIRIT of Chriſtianity, and a heart affected with the views of happineſs and miſery according to the declarations of the Goſpel.

Univerſal Benevolence is no where repreſented to ſuch advantage, as in the ſacred Scripture. The *importance* of it, with the *various ways* of its acting, and the *degree* that ſhould be aimed at, will appear to all that have benevolence enough to peruſe the following ſheets.

I ſhall only here beg leave to retain the Reader while I ſet before him the extent, the unlimited extent, of that *affection* our bleſſed Saviour would promote in all his followers. The ſteps by which he leads them to this, are very remarkable.

Firſt he teacheth his Diſciples not to confine their love and kindneſs to their own *families* or *kindred*; but to carry their relative reſpect and tenderneſs to all that are of the *houſhold* of *faith*, and that *do the will* of his *Father* who is in Heaven. "When one ſaid unto him, "behold thy mother and thy bre-"thren ſtand without, deſiring to "ſpeak with thee: He anſwered "and ſaid unto him that told him, "Who is my mother? and who "are my brethren? And then "ſtretching forth his hand toward "his diſciples, he ſaid, behold my "mother and my brethren. For "whoſoever ſhall do the will of "my Father in heaven, the ſame "is my brother and ſiſter and mo-"ther *." All that kind of love to *Relations*, which contracts and narrows the mind, Chriſt would have diſclaimed by every one that

* Matth. xii. 47. *to the end.*

bears

bears the name of a Chriſtian. He would have us to look upon all that are truly religious with relative endearments.

But then the *next* ſtep that he takes, is, to extend the affection beyond thoſe that are religious according to our *particular way* and *judgment*. Though we may think we are in the right, and that others are wrong and grievouſly miſtaken, yet we muſt ſhew kindneſs and good will to them. The *Jews* had ſuch a very bad opinion concerning the *Samaritans*, that they thought them wholly cut off from the church of God. And our Saviour himſelf decides the controverſy that was betwixt them, when he ſays, "Salvation is of the *Jews*." Their hatred was mutual, and ſo great that they had no dealings with one another. Yet in this very caſe, to raiſe Benevolence, our Saviour propoſeth the example of a *good Samaritan*,

that he might enlarge the heart of a *Jewiſh Lawyer* *. There is a beauty and force beyond deſcription in that Parable, if it be read carefully and conſidered in all its Circumſtances.

The *third* ſtep for enlarging the hearts of his followers in goodneſs and benevolence, was to extend it to *all mankind*. They were taught to look upon their whole *race* as objects of divine care and compaſſion. He tells them, that many ſhould be ſaved out of the moſt diſtant quarters of the Earth, and ſhould come from thence to ſit down with them in the kingdom of GOD. The love of their own nation and country, which had wrought ſuch wonders among the *Greeks* and *Romans* as well as *Jews*, in teaching them to ſacrifice private intereſt and ſometimes life it ſelf for the publick good; yet was not ſufficient to greaten the

* Luke x. 25, to 38.

minds

minds of Chriſtians equally to what our Saviour propoſed and deſigned, till the whole world was looked upon as their Father's houſe and kingdom, and they were univerſally deſirous of the ſalvation and welfare of *all men*. "Go ye into all the world, "and preach the Goſpel to every "creature *."

After this care of our bleſſed LORD to enlarge the minds of Chriſtians, the narrow hating condemning Spirit, proves thoſe profeſſors to be only in the *firſt ſtate* of the Apoſtles, when our Saviour rebuked them and ſaid, "Ye know not what "manner of ſpirit ye are of ‡."

But it may be proper here to add one caution; namely, that we do not deceive ourſelves by pretending *general kindneſs*, and to make all chriſtian *allowances* to thoſe that are *unknown* and at a diſtance from us, while we are wanting in Charity

* Luke ix. 55. ‡ Mark xvi. 15.

and

and Good-will to thoſe with whom we *worſhip*, or daily *converſe*. Some men will talk much for love and forbearance toward thoſe that are of *other churches*, and yet ſhew all manner of ſtiffneſs and ill-will to thoſe they are ſet againſt in their *own communions*. Some men profeſs great Charity for Proteſtants *abroad*, and yet can make no allowances for ſuch as are of the ſame ſentiments *at home*. This is not the true Spirit of Chriſtianity, which firſt teacheth men *brotherly kindneſs*, and then to add to brotherly kindneſs *Charity* *.

A few words concerning the differences which have lately ariſen even about Charity it ſelf. Let them be thus compromiſed. *Firſt* to love and value thoſe who may err (as we think) in the *manner* of their aſſerting and maintaining their opinions; becauſe Charity that believeth all things will ſuppoſe it to be an honeſt

* 2 Pet. i. 7.

concern

concern for Truth that hath engaged their hearts. *Secondly* to be patient and forbearing toward thoſe that err (as we think) in Points of Doctrine, becauſe of that Benevolence and Chriſtian Temper for which they are Advocates; and by preſerving of which, Truth will have a fair opportunity of being well heard, and ſo making its way. And *thirdly*, by both ſides rejoicing in one common *hope*, that Truth and Love ſhall meet and rejoice together at laſt. A ſincere deſire of doing ſomething to anſwer theſe purpoſes, hath led me to treat on this ſubject more largely than was intended in my original deſign. Whatever Candor and Charity I need, the Subject I hope will put the Reader in mind to practiſe toward me as he goes along: And, upon peruſal of the whole with ſuch a temper, my hope alſo is, that a good Diſpoſition will be excited and improved toward ALL men, as their

their differing circumſtances require. "Bleſſed are the peace-makers; "for they ſhall be called the chil- "dren of God." Yea, bleſſed alſo are they that ſuffer from *unpeaceable* ſpirits, if they continue in ways of righteouſneſs. So ſaith the faithful and true Witneſs: "Bleſſed are "you when men ſhall revile you, "and ſhall ſay all manner of evil "againſt you *falſly* [or as the Margin renders it, *lying*] "for my ſake: Re- "joice, and be exceeding glad, for "great is your reward in heaven.

THE

THE

SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT

OF

Mercy, *or* Charity.

INTRODUCTION.

TO prepare for that account which the *Scriptures* give of this ſocial virtue, or chriſtian grace, CHARITY; it may be of uſe to conſider a little how clearly it is taught, and how ſtrongly enforced, by *natural* Religion and the *reaſon* of things. We are taught goodneſs and mercy from the *divine* nature, and from *human* nature too.

The communicative goodneſs of GOD ſhines through the whole creation: And its benefits are innumerable to every creature.

There is a tenderneſs and compaſſion manifeſted, as long as any creature is capable of it, even toward thoſe that fall into miſery: Which cannot be better deſcribed than by that ſhort ſentence, *His tender mercies are over all his works.* As this character of the divine Being, renders him peculiarly excellent and amiable to us; ſo our reaſon tells us that we ought to copy after it: And that the nearer we come to it, the more do we partake of a divine excellency and glory.

This we may alſo learn, in ſome meaſure, from *humane nature* in the firſt and moſt genuine tendency and workings of it. A kind and compaſſionate temper, in pitying, and relieving, and doing favourable and beneficent things to one another, is called *humanity.* Which evidently implies, that the humane nature itſelf is *ſo far* loſt and deſtroy'd, as a benevolent compaſſionate diſpoſition is rooted out.

When we enter the ſtage of action in the world, and are unacquainted with the wickedneſs, baſeneſs, and treachery that ſome men are practiſed in, our hearts at *firſt* open themſelves to benevolence and eaſy friendſhips. We are vehemently urged to contract intimacies, and mightily affected with the evils that happen to our *companions* and *acquaintance.* Yea there is a ſtrong ſympathy in nature, that, till it is ſpoiled or ſpent, makes us extremely uneaſy to behold or hear

of

of grievous calamities coming upon thoſe that are *perſonally unknown* and ſtrangers to us.

Indeed, this ſympathy is more hardly and rarely diſcover'd, after we have long ſuffered in our own perſons by the ill-uſage of thoſe about us. Through repeated ſlights, or abuſes, and a continued courſe of ill-treatment, our hearts become gradually fortified and guarded againſt *tender impreſſions*. On theſe accounts it may be thought a mark of wiſdom, and experience, to gain a hardy unimpreſſive temper. But this is manifeſtly owing to a man's troubles in life, and his unhappy ſituation amongſt diſorderly, and envious, and baſely ſelfiſh creatures. Let him get rid again of all that he ſees *unnatural*, in himſelf or others, and he will return to his firſt ſympathy and benevolence of mind. Yea tho' a man ſhould endeavour *not to* return to it, yet in the hardieſt breaſts there are ſome *ſecret commotions*, a tenderneſs upon particular occaſions, that will ſhew the *tendency of nature* however it may be ſuppreſs'd or contradicted in the outward carriage and behaviour.

There is a great deal of ſympathetick pleaſure, and pain, in our very *animal* nature: And there is ſtill more, and of a much nobler kind, in our *rational* nature. So that if we follow the dictates of humanity, and ſhew our ſelves without diſguiſe, in our ten-

dereſt and moſt compaſſionate diſpoſitions, kindneſs and mercy will be our ſtudy, practice, and pleaſure. It is the glory of *Chriſtianity* to renew our minds in this reſpect, and to aſſiſt *effectually* our return to this original goodneſs of our nature.

That we may be engaged further to apply our thoughts to this ſubject, let it be conſidered, That without practiſing the ſeveral branches of Charity hereafter deſcribed, there would be no living in this world. Such is the preſent ſtate of things, that, without *mercy*, there could be no ſociety preſerved amongſt men. All men are on one account or other objects of forbearance, forgiveneſs, compaſſion, or relief and help to one another. We are ſo to others, as well as they to us. Therefore, without the temper of kindneſs and charity this earth muſt become a hell for all manner of blaſphemy and miſery: Or theſe few that live in peace, muſt live in perfect ſolitude, and cities be left deſolate.

The *uncharitable* part of mankind, we ſhall always obſerve to be the bane and poiſon of all ſociable life. Looking upon thoſe that are in proſperity with *envy*, and upon thoſe in adverſity with *inſult* or diſdain, they have no friendly diſpoſition toward either. They can neither ſhare the pleaſures of thoſe that are in *higher* circumſtances than themſelves, nor ſympathize with thoſe

thoſe that ſink in troubles *beneath* them. Were ſuch tempers to prevail, they would break off all communication betwixt the proſperous, and afflicted; or make themſelves the deteſtation of both; and all hands would be continually lifted up againſt each other. Whereas if Charity looks up to the proſperous, it ſhews their joys; and if it looks down on the diſtreſſed, it feels their pains; and it is the glad conveyer of ſuccours and pleaſures, of bleſſings and gratitude, from the one to the other.

The compaſſionate benevolent mind looks with concern on the *ſudden changes* that frequently happen in this world: And makes the beſt proviſion it can, to be helpful to others at ſuch times. Whether great alterations and troubles come upon men by the *Juſtice* of Providence, to *puniſh* their known *ſins*; or by the *Wiſdom* of Providence, for the *trial* of their *graces*; yet a kind and generous nature ſtands ready to yield proper relief, and to engage others ſo to do. The more any man contemplates the uncertainty of preſent things, and his own liableneſs to the *ſame diſaſters* that he ſees fall upon others, (or to the ſame follies and temptations that lead to them,) the more neceſſary will a merciful temper appear to be, in the preſent condition of this world.

Once more: When we conſider our ſelves as paſſing to *another ſtate* of exiſtence, where

where love and goodneſs riſe to the higheſt perfection, and will make the bliſs of that ſtate univerſal and everlaſting; when we think of all temporal power, and wealth, and grandeur paſſing away, and the greateſt gifts of knowledge and tongues, (ay, and ſome of thoſe myſteries too upon which many boaſt themſelves to the deſtruction of good-will being no more of any worth or uſe; and when we conſider that the *diſpoſitions* of ſoul in which true Charity conſiſts, ſhall *remain* and be rewarded, after thoſe *acts* of Charity which relate to this world of ſins and wants and afflictions are no more needed; ſurely theſe conſiderations ſhould put us upon the moſt diligent ſtudy of this heavenly temper and frame of mind.

SECTION

SECTION I.

Of the great Worth *and* Importance *of Charity.*

ST. *Peter* carries the account of chriſtian Charity ſo high, as to ſay, " *Above all* " *things*, have fervent Charity among your " ſelves [a]." And St. *Paul* alſo gives it the ſame preeminence, " *Above all things* put on " Charity, which is the bond of perfect- " neſs [b]." He had juſt before ſpoken of their becoming *new creatures* in Chriſt Jeſus; and had repreſented the *new nature* as that which would unite " Greek and Jew, cir- " cumciſion and uncircumciſion, Barbarian, " Scythian, bond and free." This conſide- ration of being *elected* to ſuch a renewed ſpirit in Chriſt, he would have to teach men humbleneſs, meekneſs, and other graces: But then he adds, that Charity is the moſt *perfect bond of union*; or it is that which leads to *perfectneſs* and ſincerity, in theprac- tice of every grace and virtue.

By Charity in this large and general ſenſe muſt be meant, a mind filled with love to GOD and man: A ſoul governed by nothing but a prevailing benevolence, and a goodneſs like that of GOD himſelf. " To love him

[a] 1 Pet. iv. 8. [b] Coloſſ. iii. 14.

" with

" with all the heart, and to love his neigh-
" bour as himſelf, is more than all burnt-
" offerings and ſacrifices [c]." " He that lov-
" eth another hath fulfilled the law [d]."
" Under the Goſpel neither circumciſion
" availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion,
" but faith that worketh by love [e]."

This is the "*new creature*, or being born
" again, without which no man can be ſav-
" ed [f]."

We are therefore to ſtudy this, as it has the *preference* to other things; as it muſt accompany all our *good actions*; as it ought to be endeavoured after in the *moſt fervent* degree; and as it is required *mutually* among all Chriſtians.

1. This love is recommended to us *above* other particular graces. There is very good reaſon it ſhould be ſo, becauſe it includes *all*, and will moſt effectually ſecure the obſervance of every other command of GOD. All the rules of *juſtice* will then eaſily be obſerved, when a man is continually aiming at ſomething *higher*; when he is filled with ardent deſires to do *good* and *kind* things, as well as things that are ſtrictly *equitable*, and may be claimed as a debt.

[c] Mark xii. 33. [d] Rom. xiii. 8. [e] Galat. v. 6.
[f] John iii. 3. compared with Gal. vi. 15.

Our

Our Bleſſed SAVIOUR hath therefore made this a peculiar commandment. "This is "MY commandment, that ye love one ano-"ther as I have *loved* you[g]." *My* command; ſo that you can never truly bear my Name, nor receive and practiſe my Religion, unleſs you enter into that *ſpirit of love* that hath been the very ſpring of all my undertakings as Mediator betwixt GOD and man; that love which is the ſoul of all my actions and ſufferings in the fleſh, for your ſakes. This therefore is my *firſt*, my *great command*, that muſt ſtand at the head of all you profeſs to believe, or to do in my name and for my ſake. I inſiſt upon it, (as if he had ſaid) that the forming your tempers according to that love and goodneſs you ſee in ME, be your main care; and that you look to this as the continual guide, and ſupport, both of your faith and obedience. Never ſet up any *creeds* in my name that ſhall either *deſtroy* Charity, or ſhew a *want* of it. Never place obedience to GOD in *auſterity* and *want* of affection, or in cenſorioufneſs and *diſaffection* towards your neighbour. See that your *temper* be gentle, meek and kind, both in your receiving and defending my *doctrines*, and alſo in obſerving and teaching my *precepts*, or elſe you will not prove your ſelves my genuine Diſciples.

From hence we ſee that the *Apoſtles* of

[g] John xv. 12.

our Lord, did but ſpeak the ſenſe of our Lord himſelf, when they ſet Charity *above all things*. The cleareſt and ſtrongeſt declarations on this head, we have in one of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*, " Though " I ſpeak with the *tongues* of men and of " angels, and have not charity, I am become " as ſounding braſs or a tinkling cymbal. " And though I have the gift of *prophecy*, " and underſtand all *myſteries* and all know- " ledge, and though I have all *faith* ſo as " that I could remove mountains, and have " no charity, I am nothing: And though I " beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and " though I give my body to be burned, " and have not charity, it profiteth me no- " thing[h]. "

Suppoſe the Apoſtle *ſpeaking* this to the chriſtian aſſembly at *Corinth*, and in modern language, it would be to the effect following.

' Though I could entertain you in the ' beſt manner that ever the tongue of ' man was able to entertain an audience; ' yea, though I could as far exceed all the ' thoughts and eloquence of man, as an An- ' gel himſelf could be ſuppoſed to do; yet, ' without a mind *rightly affected* to GOD and ' man, all I could ſay would be but an emp- ' ty, or a harſh and grating ſound. Though ' I could by the ſpirit of propheſy tell what

[h] 1 Cor. xiii. 1, &c.

' ſhould

'ſhould happen in future times to your 'ſelves, and to the church of Chriſt, and 'to all the nations of the world; and tho' 'I had ſuch an underſtanding in all the my-'ſteries of the Jewiſh ſcriptures, and their 'religious ſervices, as to reveal and unfold 'them to your higheſt admiration and ſa-'tisfaction; though I had ſkill and power 'to inſtruct you in all ſciences, and had the 'moſt exquiſite knowledge in philoſophy, 'and could explain all the principles and 'compoſitions in nature, and all the laws of 'motion and gravity: Nay, though I had 'a faith that were ſtrong enough to produce 'miraculous effects, and even to do things 'that are next to impoſſible, as the remov-'ing mountains is generally eſteemed; yet, 'if I have not a prevailing benevolence, and 'goodneſs of heart and ſpirit, I am nothing.'

'More than all this; though I ſhould 'give my *goods* to the *poor*, and beſtow all 'that ever I have in alms, till I come to need 'alms myſelf; or though I ſhould in a pro-'feſſed zeal for GOD, or any truth of his, 'give my *body* to be *burned*, and in the 'eſteem of men die a glorious martyr; yet 'if theſe things be the fruit of bigotry, or 'paſſion, or ambition, or any corrupt af-'fection; they profit nothing: All is loſt 'and of no avail, without the generous, 'kind, and lovely diſpoſition of chriſtian 'Charity.'

There muſt be a heart benevolent, and communicative in imitation of the goodneſs of God and Chriſt. There muſt be an acting from ſuch a principle, as is above all earthly motives or oppoſitions. The whole ſoul muſt be put into the very mold of love and goodneſs, and all its capacities and acquirements muſt be uſed as becomes ſuch an exalted divine nature.

For want of this, true piety languiſhes; infidelity triumphs, in drawing men to follow the pretences of vain philoſophy and high conceit: And *good* men are doing that in the church of Chriſt, which all their enemies *without* could never effect; i. e. breaking the ſpirits and diſcouraging the honeſt zeal of one another. O! when ſhall the Goſpel-charity come to be thorougly ſtudied and practiſed in the chriſtian world!

A matter of ſo vaſt importance, ſhould engage a proportionable regard. A nobler ſubject cannot be inſiſted on by any writer, nor can you poſſibly attend to one more neceſſary and uſeful. Let who will glory in gifts, or characters of diſtinction amongſt men, St. *Paul* tells us [h], that Charity is *more excellent* than theſe; ſince this only ſtampeth a true worth and value upon them.

The *duration* of Charity alſo is ſuch, as to ſet it not only above all *gifts*, but to render it *chief* of all the *graces* too. "Now

[h] 1 Cor. xii. 31.

"abideth

" abideth faith, hope, and charity, these " three, [including all that makes a complete Chriſtian;] " but the greateſt of theſe " is *charity* [i]."

2. Charity is to be placed at the *head* of *all good actions*, and can only ſecure the right diſcharge of them.

The place before quoted may be read, " *before* all things * have fervent charity." The Scriptures which enforce, and more particularly explain this, are as follow. " Let " all your things be done with charity [k]." " Uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the " fleſh, but by love ſerve one another [l]." Let Charity and love make you as ready to ſerve each other, though you are in a ſtate of liberty, as if you were *bound* to ſuch ſervices and good offices. " As every man " hath received the gift, even ſo miniſter " the ſame one to another, as good ſtew- " ards of the manifold grace of God [m]." " As we have opportunity let us do good " unto all men; eſpecially unto thoſe who " are of the houſhold of faith [n]."

" The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat; and " he that watereth, ſhall be watered alſo " himſelf [o]." " Give, and it ſhall be given " unto thee; good meaſure, preſſed down

[i] 1 Cor. xiii. 13. * πρὸ πάντων. [k] 1 Cor. xvi. 14.
[l] Gal. v. 13. [m] 1 Pet. iv. 10. [n] Gal. vi. 10.
[o] Prov. xi. 25.

" and

" and ſhaken together and running over, " ſhall men give into your boſom: For " with the ſame meaſure that ye mete with- " al, it ſhall be meaſured to you again [p]." This is to be applied to acts of *mercy* and *goodneſs* as well as to thoſe of *juſtice*.

" Uſe hoſpitality one to another without " grudging [q]." And let not your goodneſs be kept amongſt your ſelves; " For if ye do " good to thoſe that do good to you, ſin- " ners alſo do even the ſame [r]."

If we are concerned about *truth*, love muſt do every thing to ſecure and promote it; " that, ſpeaking the truth in love, we " may grow up unto him in all things " which is the head, even Chriſt [s]." The " encreaſe alſo of the body, and the edify- " ing our ſelves is in *love*." All that reſpects the *head*, and all that is done to enlarge or edify the *body*, is to be done in Charity, and to flow from thence.

And then as to practical Religion; " the " very ſcope and end of the commandment " is charity [t]." As love was the fulfilling of the old Law, ſo under the Goſpel nothing availeth, but " faith working by love [u]." " This is *love*, that we walk after the com- " mandment [w]."

By this prevailing benevolence and good-

[p] Luke vi. 38. [q] 1 Pet. iv. 9. [r] Luke vi. 32.
[s] Epheſ. iv. 15, 16. [t] 1 Tim. i. 5. [u] Gal. v. 6.
[w] 2 Ep. John. ver. 6.

neſs

neſs of ſoul, we ſhall be rendered perfect, or ſincere, in all *relative* duties; and this will alſo make us unblameable in holineſs before God. "The Lord make you to en-"creaſe and abound in love one towards an-"ther, and towards all men, even as we do "towards you: To the end he may eſta-"bliſh your hearts unblameable *in holineſs* "before God[x]."

3. The worth of Charity being ſo great, and its place ſo high, we are required to endeavour after it in its *moſt fervent* degree.

Have *fervent* Charity among your ſelves. "See that ye love one another with a pure "heart *fervently*[y]." "Let us not love in word, "neither in tongue," [as if we thought good words a ſufficient expreſſion of Charity,] "but "in deed and in truth[z]." "And walk in "love as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath "given himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacri-"fice to God, for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour[a]."

Our good will and kindneſs ought to be ſo great as to take pleaſure in thoſe very things which may be attended with no preſent reward. "Do good and lend, hoping "for nothing again, and your reward ſhall "be great in another world," [whatever your lot may be in this dying ſtate,] "and ye "ſhall be the children of the Higheſt[b]."

[x] 1 Theſſ. iii. 12, 13. [y] 1 Pet. i. 22. [z] 1 John iii. 18.
[a] Epheſ. v. 2. [b] Luke vi. 35.

The feeding of *friends* and *brethren*, or treating *rich neighbours* that may make one a recompence, our Saviour ſpeaks of as comparatively *no* kindneſs or goodneſs, to our feeding or giving to the *poor* and *maimed*, and ſuch as cannot *recompenſe* us for what we have done [c]."

The fervours of Charity ought to be ſo ſtrong as even to " bleſs thoſe that curſe us, " and to pray for them that deſpitefully uſe " us [d]." But this being a matter of the greateſt difficulty, and what hath by ſome been objected againſt, as an unnatural and unreaſonable command in Chriſtianity, I ſhall conſider it more fully and diſtinctly by itſelf hereafter.

To proceed therefore to another meaſure of Charity: It ſhould riſe to ſuch a degree, as not only to ſhew itſelf, when occaſions fall in our way; but to enquire after, and diligently *ſeek* for proper occaſions and objects of it. " If thou forbear to deliver them " that are drawn unto death, and thoſe that " are ready to be ſlain: If thou ſayeſt, be- " hold we knew it not," [when that ignorance was only becauſe you did not care to know, or be acquainted with ſuch things] " doth not he that pondereth the heart con- " ſider it? And he that keepeth the ſoul, " doth not he know it? And ſhall not he " render to every one according to his

[c] Luke xiv. 12, 13. [d] Mat. v. 44.

" works [e]?"

" works [e]?" Will not the prevailing temper of a man's own heart, which GOD ponders in all its motions, be conſidered in the day of recompence? And will not GOD ſhew mercy, or ſeverity, according as he knows that ſoul of thine hath loved and ſought, or neglected and turn'd away from, occaſions of mercy and charity?

A further degree of Charity is to extend it to all ſorts of perſons with *faithfulneſs* and *continuance*. This is recommended by the character of *Gaius*: " Beloved, thou do'ſt " faithfully, whatſoever thou do'ſt to the " brethren, and to ſtrangers, which have " born witneſs of thy charity before the " Church [f]." " And the Lord make you " to encreaſe, and abound in love one to " another, and toward *all* men [g]."

The higheſt degree of Charity is *dying*, to compaſs the main end of it. This St. *John* recommends in imitation of Chriſt. If we are called to it for a publick good, and to promote the ſalvation of others, in any ſuch way, as *he* was, we ſhould be ready to ſuffer with him. " Hereby perceive " we the love of GOD; becauſe he laid down " his life for us, and we ought to lay down " our lives for the brethren [h]."

4. Charity muſt be *mutual*, amongſt *all* Chriſtians, and *extend to all caſes* that call

[e] Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. [f] 3 Ep. John 5, 6.
[g] 1 Theſſ. iii. 12. [h] 1 John iii. 16.

for it. So the general rule ſtands, "Have "fervent charity *amongſt your ſelves.*"

All the faithful followers of Chriſt are deſcribed as making *one body*; and all are ordered ſo, "that there ſhould be no ſchiſm "in the body; but that the members ſhould "have the ſame care, one of another. And "whether one member ſuffer, all the mem-"bers ſuffer with it; or one member be ho-"noured, all the members rejoice with it[i]." There cannot be a plainer ſtronger way, of repreſenting the obligations Chriſtians are under to *mutual* Charity, than this, of the *members* of the *ſame body* being immediately affected with the pleaſures, or pains, that any *one part* ſuſtains. But to ſtrengthen this, add that text, where Chriſtians are required in the expreſſions of goodneſs to be all of *one mind*, "having compaſſion one of ano-"ther, and to love as brethren[k]."

Again; Charity muſt extend in this mutual ſympathy, to *all caſes* that call for it. Theſe will be diſtinctly pointed out in the following Sections. Only here let me obſerve in general, that however eaſy I am with the *faults* of others, and ready to cover or excuſe them, if I don't pity them in their *wants* too, and as far as lies in my power relieve them, one branch of Charity will not make up for the want of another. And if I ſhould relieve the poor and

[i] 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26. [k] 1 Pet. iii. 8.

needy,

needy, but yet have no tenderneſs for the *ſins* and miſcarriages of men, or no patience with thoſe that differ from me in matters of Religion, my Charity will not anſwer the exigencies of ſociety, nor be acceptable to God. For his word directs that it ſhould extend to the *faults* and *ſins* of others: "Charity covereth a multitude of *ſins*[l]." It muſt alſo extend to the *different opinions* of men, and the different impreſſions they are under in matters of Religion. "Him "that is weak in the faith receive, but "not to doubtful diſputations. Let us not "therefore judge any more; but judge this "rather, that no man put a ſtumbling-block, "or an occaſion to fall, in his brother's "way[m]." And it muſt extend to the *wants* and neceſſities of others. "The righteous "conſidereth the cauſe of the poor, but the "wicked regardeth not to know it[n]."

The Scripture account of each of theſe ſhall be diſtinctly drawn out, after I have paid due reſpect to St. *Paul*'s comprehenſive and moſt beautiful deſcription of Charity, by ſetting to view the particulars he hath given us in his xiii. Chapter of the 1ſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*. For the fuller underſtanding of which I ſhall ſearch out the Scripture-ſenſe of every ſingle attribute or character.

[l] 1 Pet. iv. 8. [m] Rom. xiv. 1, 13. [n] Prov. xxix. 7.

SECTION II.

St. Paul's Deſcription of Charity *in* 1 Cor. xiii. *explained* by other Texts of Scripture; *and* every *Attribute* kept *diſtinct*.

" CHarity ſuffereth long; and is kind.
" Charity envieth not. Charity vaunt-
" eth not itſelf; is not puffed up; doth not
" behave itſelf unſeemly; ſeeketh not her
" own; is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no
" evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity; but rejoic-
" eth in the Truth: Beareth all things: be-
" lieveth all things: hopeth all things: en-
" dureth all things. Charity never faileth.

Thus ſtands the moſt conciſe, elegant, and extenſive account of this virtue, that is to be found any where drawn up in one continued connexion. In which is contained a full deſcription of the diſpoſitions and actings of a ſoul that is completely molded by it. And tho' according to the common explications of the various expreſſions uſed in this place, ſeveral of them coincide, and are made to ſay the ſame thing; yet a careful examination of the ſenſe of the original words, will ſhew that every ſingle attribute of Charity, as it is here ſet down, is diſtinct from the others. And all together include

and

and comprehend the whole Scripture account of this chriſtian grace.

The *firſt* deſcriptive note or attribute of Charity, is, that it *ſuffereth long*.

It is *great of mind*, extending itſelf to the nobleſt and largeſt views of things. And with an eye to a *diſtant* good, it can put up *preſent* offences, and inconveniencies. This renders the *temper* long, or extenſive; above thoſe paſſionate, and haſty concluſions which excite oppoſition and animoſities. Charity enlargeth the *heart*, and greatens it, above taking notice of mean and *little things*; and above taking advantage of *ill things*, where thoſe that are the offenders profeſs repentance. It enables a man to keep a calmneſs and firmneſs of ſoul, under afflictions and croſſes, and in the delay of promiſed expected bleſſings. This is the true and full ſenſe of the *Greek* word, here render'd *ſuffereth long* *, as it is uſed in other places of Scripture. It is, as *Chryſoſtom* ſays, the root and ground-work of all philoſophy †.

Greatneſs of mind and its extenſive views are deſcribed by this word, in the caſe of *Abraham*. He obtained the promiſe of God (who ſaid, "Surely bleſſing I will bleſs thee, "and multiplying I will multiply thee,") by

* Μακροθυμεῖ. † Αὕτη τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἡ ῥίζα πάσης. Chryſ. Hom. xxxiii. in Ep. 1 ad Corinth.

keeping

keeping a *longanimity* in the hope of it *. Thus patiently extending his mind and views to the divine promiſe, he at laſt obtain'd it. With an eye to a *diſtant* good, he put up many preſent evils and hardſhips. In this ſenſe the word is uſed three times in two verſes in the Epiſtle of *James*. Our tranſlation puts the ſenſe of the original thus, "Be *patient* therefore, brethren, unto the "coming of the Lord. Behold, the huſ-"bandman waiteth for the precious fruit of "the earth, and hath *long patience* for it, "until he receive the early and latter rain. "Be ye alſo *patient* P." It is plain our tranſlators were not ſatisfied with rendering the word *be patient*, becauſe they put two other renderings in the margin; *Be long patient*, or *ſuffer with long* patience. I would therefore underſtand that place thus; Keep your minds and views, brethren, *extended* to the coming of your Lord. Behold, the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath a *great or long extent of mind* toward it, till he receive the early and latter rain. Be you thus enlarged in the view and expectation of the coming of your Lord. The conſequence of which will be to put up, and bear patiently preſent inconveniencies, when an approaching expected good thus greatens your ſouls.

* Οὕτω μακροθυμήσας. Heb. vi. 15. P Jam. v. 7, 8. μακροθυμήσατε.

To

To proceed: This greatneſs or length and extent of ſoul, as it reſpects the *heart* and *temper*, is ſometimes deſcribed by being *patient toward all men* [q]. But that it is intended to ſignify more than *patience* in that very place ſeems evident, from the other exerciſes of Charity to which it is there connected. When it is ſaid, "Comfort the fee-"ble minded; ſupport the weak;" then follows, "be *of an enlarged generous temper* to-"ward all men." It certainly ſtands much better thus, then *be patient toward all men.* For the two branches of patience are particularly exhorted to in the verſe following; *i.e.* ſuſtaining evils, and continuing to follow that which is good.

Thus in the parable of the Debtor, the word is rendered twice, *Have patience with me.* But it plainly implieth more than a *bare forbearance.* It is interpreted by the actions that follow: "A Being generouſly "moved with compaſſion, looſing, and for-"giving the debt." And when the ſervant is repreſented as not having the *ſame enlargement* and goodneſs of diſpoſition, he is condemn'd for acting raſhly, "taking his fel-"low ſervant by the throat;" and, without any marks of compaſſion and generoſity, caſting him into priſon [r].

Theſe places are ſufficient to ſhew that this firſt deſcription of Charity, [*ſuffereth long*]

[q] 1 Theſſ. v. 14. [r] Mat. xviii. 26. &c.

keeping a *longanimity* in the hope of it *. Thus patiently extending his mind and views to the divine promiſe, he at laſt obtain'd it. With an eye to a *diſtant* good, he put up many preſent evils and hardſhips. In this ſenſe the word is uſed three times in two verſes in the Epiſtle of *James*. Our tranſlation puts the ſenſe of the original thus, "Be *patient* therefore, brethren, unto the "coming of the Lord. Behold, the huſ-"bandman waiteth for the precious fruit of "the earth, and hath *long patience* for it, "until he receive the early and latter rain. "Be ye alſo *patient* P." It is plain our tranſlators were not ſatisfied with rendering the word *be patient*, becauſe they put two other renderings in the margin; *Be long patient*, or *ſuffer with long* patience. I would therefore underſtand that place thus; Keep your minds and views, brethren, *extended* to the coming of your Lord. Behold, the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath a *great or long extent of mind* toward it, till he receive the early and latter rain. Be you thus enlarged in the view and expectation of the coming of your Lord. The conſequence of which will be to put up, and bear patiently preſent inconveniencies, when an approaching expected good thus greatens your ſouls.

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[q] 1 Theſſ. v. 14. [r] Mat. xviii. 26. &c.

is ſuch as truly ought to go *firſt*, when it is underſtood of that greatneſs of ſoul and temper in general, upon which all the other acts and exerciſes of Charity depend *. And by this explication, what is ſaid afterward, of Charity not being eaſily provoked, and enduring all things, will appear to have their diſtinct meaning; but if the word [μακροθυμεῖ] *ſuffereth long*, be taken to mean no more than *patience*, they will not. This is the ground-work of all the following attributes of Charity; and therefore our greateſt care and diligence ſhould be directed to form the mind, and temper, according to this account of the greatneſs and extenſiveneſs of both.

The *next* thing ſaid of Charity, (which is indeed inſeparable from a mind truly great and generous) is, That *it is kind*.

The word ſignifies, it is *profitable* †. This is the primary ſenſe of it. A generous enlarged mind and temper will ſhew itſelf in uſeful *beneficial actions*. For "if a brother "or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily "food, and one ſay to them, Depart in "peace, be you warmed and filled; notwith-"ſtanding ye give them not thoſe things "which are needful to the body, what doth

* Τὸ πάντων αἴτιον τῶν ἀγαθῶν. Chryſ. And ſpeaking afterward of him who is called μακρόθυμος he adds, μακράν τινα ἡ μεγάλιο ἔχει ψυχήν. † Χρησεύεται. Χρησός venit ἀπὸ τῦ χρῆσθαι ab utendo; unde χρησὸς prima ſignificatione utilis, ἄχρηστος inutilis.

it

"it profit [s]?" In this ſenſe GOD is ſaid to be [χρηστὸς] "*kind*, to the unthankful, and "to the evil [t]." It is made the reaſon why we ſhould *do good*, and *lend*, hoping for nothing again; and therefore muſt be underſtood of his *doing good*, whoſe example we are to follow.

In a ſecondary ſenſe, the word may be rendered as it often is, *eaſy*, *gentle*, and full *of benignity*. So the yoke, or government, of Chriſt is ſaid to be *eaſy* [u]. Tho' it may be read there, my yoke is *profitable*, ſecuring that gain which is preferable to the gain of the whole world; *i. e.* the ſalvation of the ſoul. And anſwering the labours and expectations of that ſoul, that is weary of ſeeking after and depending upon other things. Other rules and preſcriptions *diſappoint*, the Goſpel will certainly profit, and anſwer its end in giving *reſt unto the ſoul*.

In ſome places, however, it is undoubtedly to be tranſlated by the words *goodneſs* [w], *lenity* [x], and *benignity*; yet ſo as to include thoſe actions, and *fruits* of goodneſs and kindneſs, which are beneficial and profitable to men. Thus the word *kind*, is of the ſame import with *communicative*. It ſignifies a communication of *wiſdom* and counſel; of *affections* and friendly diſpoſitions; and of outward *benefits*. In ſhort, as Charity enlarges and

[s] James ii. 15, 16. [t] Luke vi. 35. [u] Matth. xi. 30. χρηστός. [w] Rom. ii. 4. [x] Eph. iv. 32.

greatens the mind, ſo it is full of *good works.*

Therefore it is ſaid, " that the righteous (which is a word often uſed in Scripture for the charitable and liberal) " giveth, and ſpar- " eth not [y]." Whereas the contrary character ſtands deſcribed thus, " The ſoul of " the wicked deſireth evil; his neighbour " findeth no favour in his eyes [z]."

Let me here intreat the reader to ſtay a while, till he ſhall determine with himſelf to endeavour after a *greatneſs* and *extent* of mind, with a *communicative* temper, as the very life and ſoul of all the following branches of Charity, and what muſt appear in all of them. It is in vain to bid a little contracted mind, not *envy*; or to bid it not *vaunt* it ſelf of its little ornaments and advantages; or to perſuade it from *aſpiring* after the regards paid to others, or after the good things they enjoy. But let a man make it his main ſtudy and buſineſs to get a more enlarged ſoul, a more generous grateful diſpoſition of heart, and this will correct *envy* and *pride.* You may recommend all the bleſſed fruits of Charity long enough, no perſuaſion will be ſufficient ſtatedly to produce them, if there be not a kind communicative temper. Theſe firſt deſcriptions of Charity, muſt therefore be firſt and principally ſtudied by us, if we would ſucceſsfully aim at and practiſe the reſt.

[y] Prov. xxi. 26. [z] Ver. 10.

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The *third* deſcriptive character of Charity is, that it *envieth not*.

The word here rendred *envy* *, is oft taken in a good ſenſe. So it is, both in the chapter preceding and following this account of Charity. In the laſt verſe of the foregoing chapter it is rendred *covet earneſtly*, and is applied to the *beſt gifts* [a]. And in the next chapter, it is rendered *deſire ſpiritual gifts* [b]. And alſo in the Revelation, "Be "zealous therefore and repent [c]." In this ſenſe St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians* he was "zealous over them with a *godly zeal* [d]." For ſo it ſhould be read, rather than *jealous with a godly jealouſy*. When therefore *earneſt coveting* or deſiring, and being *zealouſly* moved, are denied of Charity, we are to underſtand it of the power that an enlarged and kind ſpirit hath over *zeal it ſelf*. It doth not emulate the gifts and excellencies of others, ſo as to prevent, or any way leſſen, the good fruits and effects of them. It doth not affect thoſe gifts and excellencies out of ambition, to draw fame from others to it ſelf. Thus St. *Paul* in another place explains this word; uſing it twice in one verſe, when he tells the *Galatians* that their *Jewiſh* ſeducers "zealouſly affected them, but not well; yea "they would exclude you [or us] that you

* Ζηλοῖ. [a] 1 Cor. xii. 31. [b] Chap. xiv. 1.
[c] Rev. iii. 19. [d] 2 Cor. xi. 2.

" might affect them [e]." Charity utterly diſclaims all ſuch zeal and pretence of affection as this is. While Chriſtian love accounts it " good to be always zealouſly af-" fected in a good thing [f]; yet it will not allow it ſelf to ſhew this zealous affection in any way that is *invidious*, or that would leſſen the eſteem, and love, and praiſe which is due to another.

Thus in a ſecondary ſenſe of the word, and as it reſpects the evil temper that there is in an *ambitious zeal*, it may be ſaid not to *envy*. Charity doth not *deſire to have* any thing, in the ſenſe that St. *James* uſeth the word, with an *ambitious affectation* [g]. It do's not fret to ſee others more *rich* or *honourable*. It do's not grieve at any man's greater *reputation* or *ſucceſs*. It do's not ſeek to ſhade any man's ſuperiour *wiſdom* or *learning*. In ſhort, it do's not make the countenance pale at any *advantage* which another hath, either for this world or a better, " When the kind-" neſs and love of God our Saviour toward " man appeareth to any ſoul, it is taken out of that ſtate, wherein we are ſaid " to live " in malice and envy, hateful and hating one " another [h]." He that loves his neighbour *as himſelf*, cannot grudge him any excellency or advantage that he enjoys, nor can he de-

[e] Gal. iv. 17. [f] Ver. 18. [g] φονεύετε καὶ ζηλοῦτε ambitioſa affectatione rei expetitæ. Beza et ex eo Stephan. Tom. 1. p. 1402. [h] Tit. iii. 3, 4.

ſire

ſire to have it from him; becauſe he would not grudge at ſuch bleſſings, were they his own lot, nor be willing to have them taken away. To ſee the light of others ſhining before men, ſhould make us glorify their and our common Father who is in Heaven.

The *fourth* deſcriptive character of Charity, is, that it *vaunteth not it ſelf.* As it doth not ambitiouſly deſire, or envy the gifts of others, ſo it doth not vainly and with oſtentation make a ſhew of its own advantages. "Thus ſaith the Lord, Let not the "wiſe man glory in his wiſdom; neither "let the mighty man glory in his might; "let not the rich man glory in his riches [i]."

The word here uſed by the *Apoſtle*, is explained by the *Greek* Fathers to ſignify a freedom from all gawdy and falſe ornaments; from an affectation of ſuperfluities, and ſeeking to make a figure by things that ſhall draw the notice of men, but are no way beneficial, or of any real ſervice *. Charity will not ſet a uſeleſs acquirement in the place of a uſeful one; will not paint or colour any of a man's little advantages above their real worth: Yea, it will not allow him to make a *boaſt* of the greateſt good that is in him, or done by him. "Let another praiſe thee,

[i] Jerem. ix. 23. * Οὐ περπερεύεται. Clem. Alexandr. *and* Baſil *ſo explain the word*, ut notet fucatum ſuperfluum et inutilem ornatum. Diat.

"and

" and not thine one mouth [k]. When ye " ſhall have done all thoſe things which are " commanded you, ſay, We are unprofit- " able ſervants; we have done that which " was our duty to do [l]. "

Others render the word *vaunteth*, by *raſhneſs*, and precipitate or unadviſed ſpeaking or acting ‖. Charity doth nothing, ſpeaketh nothing, with a fooliſh and violent conceit, or with a temper that deſpiſeth counſel and deliberation †. A ſoul that is great, and benevolent (according to the firſt general deſcriptions of Charity) will avoid every thing raſh and giddy. St. *Paul* therefore diſclaims " boaſting of things without our meaſure [m]. " And, when by others ill uſage of him, he was forc'd to boaſt of his ſervices in the Goſpel, he ſays it is not " after the Lord, but " as it were fooliſhy in this confidence of " boaſting [n] ".

When he writes under the power of a ſpirit of love and Charity, he explains all that boaſting of what he had done and ſuffered, by ſaying, " Not I, but the " grace of GOD which was with me [o]. " Good men may ſometimes be ſtirred up to

[k] Prov. xxvii. 2. [l] Luke xvii. 10. ‖ *So* Chryſoſtom. Heſych. *and ſuch as make this word the ſame with the* Latin perperus *and* perperitudo. Diater. † Syr. Vers. ſic habet *Charitas non tumultuatur*. Oecumenius quoque πέρπερον interpretatur temerarium aut protervum: Theophylactus, levem, mentis inopem. Vide Eſtij Commentar. [m] 2 Cor. x. 15. [n] Chap. xi. 17. [o] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

boaſt

boaſt of themſelves, as well as others; but the more perfect Charity is, the more it will exclude all vaunting.

The *fifth* property of Charity is, that it is *not puffed up*. This ſeems to be much the ſame with the former, but if we attend carefully we ſhall find it is diſtinct; and the diſtinction is very beautiful. As the charitable man maketh not a falſe ſhew, or a vain ſhew, or an oſtentatious boaſting of any thing in *himſelf*; ſo neither is he puffed up with the good *opinions of others*; or with the ſtation and circumſtances, in which their regards, or the providence of GOD, have placed him.

The word, I think, is on all hands allowed to ſignify, he is *not proud:* Not elated with *aſpiring* thoughts, beyond his proper ſphere, to meddle with things *above him*: Not ſwell'd with contemptuous thoughts of thoſe *beneath him:* Not blown up by one or other of theſe, to a ſpirit of oppoſition and contention. In theſe three things the whole Scripture ſenſe of the word rendered, [*puffed up* *] is comprehended.

The firſt ſenſe of it, *aſpiring* to things above our *preſent Sphere*, the Apoſtle warns the *Coloſſians* againſt, when he forbids their "intruding into thoſe things which they "have not ſeen, vainly pufft up by a fleſh-"ly mind [P]."

* Οὐ φυσιῶται. P Coloſ. ii. 18.

The

The ſecond ſenſe of this word, [a *contempt* of others inſtead of *edifying* and making them wiſer] St. *Paul* upbraids the *Corinthians* with, on account of their valuing themſelves for meer matters of *ſcience*; and in the regards that one paid to another, purely upon that ſcore. "Knowledge puffeth up, but Cha-"rity edifieth. And if any man think that he "knoweth any thing [ſo as not to make uſe of that knowledge to edify] "he knoweth no-"thing yet as he ought to know [q]."

The third ſenſe of the word, *i. e.* a being excited by one or other of the foregoing things to a ſpirit of *oppoſition* and *contention*, we have three times in one chapter. A being *puffed up for one* perſon, in oppoſition to *another* [r]: A being *puffed*, as if the Apoſtle would *not come* to vindicate himſelf [s]; againſt whom he determines, if the Lord will, not only to "know the *ſpeech* of them that *are puffed up*, "but the *power* [t]."

With relation to the *firſt*, Charity do's not lift up it ſelf to meddle with things above it. "My heart is not haughty, nor are mine "eyes lofty; neither do I exerciſe my ſelf in "things too high for me [u]."

In reference to the *ſecond*, Charity will not treat the meaneſt with contempt, but rather ſeek to make them wiſer and better. "Be-"hold GOD is mighty, and deſpiſeth not any [w].

[q] 1 Cor. viii. 2, 3. [r] Chap. iv. 6. [s] Ibid. ver. 18.
[t] Ver. 19. [u] Pſal. cxxxi. 1. [w] Job xxxvi. 5.

He

" He that deſpiſeth his neighbour ſinneth [x].
" Why doſt thou ſet at naught thy brother?
" for we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment
" ſeat of Chriſt [y]. "

With reſpect to the *third*, Charity is far from all *perſonal* oppoſitions and diſguſts. " Only by pride cometh contention [z]. The " pride of life is not of the Father, but is " of the world [a]. Be kindly affectioned one " to another with brotherly love, in honour " preferring one another [b]. "

The *ſixth* character of Charity is, that it *doth not behave itſelf unſeemly*. He that is free from miſtaken zeal and envy, from affectation of appearances and ſelf vaunting, and from an aſpiring, contemptuous, quarrelſome, puffed up ſpirit, will of courſe ſhew this by a *comely* behaviour.

Conſidering the Apoſtle's deſign in this account of Charity, (that it ſpecially aims at correcting the diſorderly, confuſed management of the *Corinthians* in the uſe of their ſpiritual gifts,) not to *behave unſeemly*, ſignifies, that no gift ſhould be exerciſed out of proper time and place; nor ſo as to claſh with, or exclude and ſuppreſs another. Charity with all its kindneſs, and averſeneſs to pride and boaſting, yet is no friend to confuſion and uncomely carriage of any ſort.

[x] Prov. xiv. 21. [y] Rom. xiv. 10. [z] Prov. xiii. 10.
[a] 1 John ii. 16. [b] Rom. xii. 16.

It is for allowing all gifts their proper eſteem, and all perſons their proper reſpect; and all to appear, and be taken notice of in their proper *place* *. It is not rude, in bearing upon, or inſulting others weakneſs and infirmities. Nor is it *mean* and *ſervile* in yielding to others diſorders and conceits.

Some underſtand by the expreſſion here uſed, that Charity is not *ſtiff* and *diſdainful*. It do's not refuſe to miniſter even to thoſe that are inferior †; nor count it a matter of ſhame to imitate the example of Chriſt, who ſtoop'd ſo low as to *waſh his diſciples feet*. He that will not learn of Chriſt to be meek and lowly, behaveth *unſeemly* in Chriſtianity. *Chryſoſtom* enlargeth very much upon this, that love counts nothing unſeemly, or matter of ſhame, either to do or ſuffer for the object beloved.

In ſhort, Charity teaches men to act in *ſcheme*, and with a due reference of one thing and one perſon to another, that the lovely order and dependences eſtabliſhed by the Goſpel may be preſerved. "Let us walk "honeſtly;" or *decently*, as the word ſignifies. That walking *fitly*, or *decently* in the epiſtle to the *Romans*, ſtands directly oppoſed in the form of expreſſion to the *unſeemly behaving* which our text denies of charity [c]. In

* Clem. Alexan. (ut vertit interpres) *non indecore ſe gerit.* Quo ſpectat etiam Tertulliani lectio, *non protervit.* Eſtij. comment. † Chryſoſt. Eraſmus. [c] Rom. xiii. 13. εὐσχημόνως, *in our text* ἀσχημοσύνῃ.

another

another place it is commanded "in the name "of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that we withdraw "our ſelves from every brother that walk-"eth diſorderly, and not after the tradition" or ſcheme of things deliver'd by the Apoſtles [d]. Upon which St. *Paul* recommends his own care to preſerve order. "For we behaved "not our ſelves diſorderly among you [e]." Charity is very watchful againſt every thing unſeemly and out of character, that it may *prevent* the out-breakings of envy, vaunting, pride, and provoking paſſions. Or that it may *remedy* the evils occaſion'd thereby, in its reducing, and bringing things to chriſtian decency and humility again, after the miſapplying and miſplacing of them. Thus we are to underſtand that direction to the *Corinthians* afterward; "Let all things be "done *decently* * and in order." Namely with all that ſeemlineſs and order which *chriſtian charity* directs, not which human power and authority may impoſe.

The *ſeventh* note of Charity is this; *ſeeketh not her own*, or, ſeeketh not the things of it ſelf †. Self-pleaſing, and ſelf-intereſt are no guides to Charity, nor have they any power to retain it.

Charity ſeeketh not any thing in the way that *ſelfiſhneſs* do's. It will teach a man to

[d] 2 Theſſ. iii. 6. [e] Ver. 7. * 1 Cor. xiv. 40. *where the word* εὐχημόνως *is again uſed.* † Οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς.

take *due care* of himſelf, and of his own happineſs; but not ſo as to neglect, injure, bear down, or afflict others. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man "alſo on the things of others [f]." Let not the ſcope and great aim of life, be *ſelf* only, but the good of others.

What are the things of *ſelf* that Charity doth not ſeek? They are as follow. The *eaſe* of ſelf is not ſought, to decline any good work that may promote the welfare of others. Love is an active grace. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of "love [g]." The *liberty* of ſelf is not ſought, where engaging in any particular office or relation comes into God's ſcheme and order of things, and we are fitted for it and called to it. "Tho' I be free from all men, yet have I "made my ſelf ſervant unto all, that I might "gain the more [h]." The *gratification* of ſelf is given up for the good of another. "If "meat make my brother to offend, I will "eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth, leſt "I make my brother to offend [i]. Let every "one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his good "to edification. For even Chriſt pleaſed not "himſelf [k]." The *intereſt* and *profit* of ſelf is not ſought, where either religion or a publick good direct to profit another. "Let no "man ſeek his own; but every man ano-

[f] Phil. ii. 4. [g] Heb. vi. 10. [h] 1 Cor. ix. 19.
[i] 1 Cor. viii. 13. [k] Rom. xv. 2, 3.

" ther's wealth. Not ſeeking mine own " profit, but the profit of many, that they " may be ſaved [l]." To perfect all; love is ſometimes repreſented as not ſeeking to preſerve *life* it ſelf, where the good of many may be promoted by offering it up [m]. So clear of all ſelfiſhneſs is Charity in its original Chriſt Jeſus, and in all that perfectly copy after him.

The *eighth* attribute of Charity is, that it *is not eaſily provoked.* It doth not fly into paſſion, or give way to violent reſentment, at the diſorders of others, or the ill uſage it meets with from them. The better reading is, that it is not *highly provok'd.*

For the word here rendered *provok'd* *, is the very ſame with that uſed to ſignify the exceeding commotion of St. *Paul*'s ſpirit when he beheld the grievous idolatries at *Athens.* It is there ſaid, " his ſpirit was ſtir- " red in him [n]." It was greatly provoked at their practices, and ſtrongly moved to oppoſe them. But to have a ſpirit thus diſturbed and agitated with things that meerly reſpect our ſelves, or that are *tolerable*, though juſtly blameable, is very unſuitable to ſuch a caſe as that of St. *Paul.* To fall into violent fits of paſſion upon every wrong done to us, or provocation that may be offered us,

[l] 1 Cor. x. 24, 33. [m] Phil. ii. 17. and 1 John iii. 16.
* Παροξύνεται. [n] Acts xvii. 16.

either

either by the weakneſs or the wilfulneſs and perverſeneſs of others, is the reverſe of Charity. " It is the glory of a man to paſs over " a tranſgreſſion [o]. Let all bitterneſs, and " wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil " ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all " malice [p]. "

Charity will not allow any *provocations* to prevail ſo far, as to be beyond all entreaty to a reconciliation, or to refuſe forgiveneſs. " Forgiving one another, if any man have a " quarrel [or complaint] againſt any, even as " Chriſt forgave you [q]. The wiſdom that " is from above is eaſy to be entreated, full " of mercy and good fruits [r]. "

The *ninth* character or deſcriptive note of Charity is, that *it thinketh no evil.*

The word here tranſlated thinketh * is uſed in Scripture in ſeveral ſenſes; its principal interpretations are *four*, which will each of them agree with what is intended in this place.

Sometimes it is uſed for *attentive meditating*, or for purpoſing. So it is ſaid, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, *think on theſe things* [s]. Charity will not thus fix the thought upon *evil*, nor allow the imagination to dwell upon it with any approbation; or ſo as to

[o] Prov. xix. 11. [p] Epheſ. iv. 31. [q] Coloſ. iii. 13.
[r] James iii. 17. * Οὐ λογίζεται. [s] Phil. iv. 8.

form

form any evil deſign or intention. The word is evidently uſed for deſign or purpoſe, in St. *Paul*'s ſpeaking of his coming to the *Corinthians* [t].

Sometimes it is tranſlated *ſuppoſe*, [or reckon] in a manner that ſignifies to apprehend or judge of a thing [v]. In this ſenſe Charity *ſuppoſeth* or *apprehendeth* no evil. As it hath no evil imaginations or deſigns in it ſelf, it doth not allow a ſurmiſing or ſuſpecting evil of others.

Again: We find the word that is rendered *thinketh* in our text, elſewhere tranſlated *reaſoneth*. As in St. *Mark*'s Goſpel, "They reaſoned with themſelves [w]." And St. *Paul* ſays, "When he was a child he "thought as a child;" [which in another reading is, he *reaſoned* as a child.] According to this interpretation, Charity doth not *reaſon out* evil: Nor do's it take pleaſure in *reaſoning upon* it; but would rather it ſhould never be named. It is the *ungodly man* that *diggeth up evil* [x].

The laſt ſenſe of the word before us, is to *impute* a thing to any one, to *ſet it down* to their *charge*, to *number* amongſt, and the like. "Bleſſed is the man to whom the "Lord will not *impute* ſin [y]. I pray GOD "that it may not be laid to their *charge* [z].

[t] 2 Cor. x. 2. [v] Chap. xi. 5. Rom. viii. 18. 1 Pet. v. 12. [w] Mark xi. 31. [x] Prov. xvi. 27. [y] Rom. iv. 4. 2 Cor. v. 19. *and many other places.* [z] 2 Tim. iv. 16.

"He

" He was *numbred* with the tranſgreſſors [a]." Thus Charity thinketh, that is, *imputeth* no evil; do's not place it to *account*, or *number* any perſon with tranſgreſſors, where it can avoid doing ſo conſiſtently with the love of GOD, and with the diſcharge of duty to the Lord our Saviour.

In oppoſition to this, the character of the wicked and uncharitable ſtands deſcribed in Scripture as *deviſing* evil [b]; *loving* it more than *good* [c]; *ſpreading* the reports of it [d]; and charging others falſly [e], or needleſsly and to their hurt [f].

Whereas of true goodneſs and love, it is declared expreſsly, and diſtinctly, that it will *hate* evil [g]. It ſuffereth not to backbite *with the tongue*, nor to *do evil* to his neighbour, nor *to take up* [or receive] a *reproach* againſt his neighbour [h]. In theſe reſpects Charity thinketh no evil.

The *tenth* attribute of Charity is, that it *rejoiceth not in iniquity*.

The word ſignifies, is not *glad* *. That is, feels no degree of pleaſure or ſatisfaction in ſeeing the faults of others †. Though there may be an opportunity to triumph over the infirmities and crimes of many; yet a cha-

[a] Mark xv. 28. [b] Pſal. xxi. 11. Iſa. xxxii. 5.
[c] Pſal. lii. 3. [d] Pſal. l. 19. [e] Jer. xx. 10.
[f] Pſal. lvi. 5. [g] Pſal. xcvii. 10. [h] Pſal. xv. 3.
* Οὐ χαίρει. † *When a high degree of gladneſs is intended, we find another word added to this,* χαίρειν καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι, μεγάλως, λίαν, &c.

ritable

ritable man can find no joy, no heart to exalt himſelf upon another's ſhame and ſin.

He doth not ſhew, by any outward expreſſions, that he hath pleaſure in iniquity of any kind. Nor can he ever ſalute it, or wiſh it to proſper *. True Charity will not flatter any iniquity, however circumſtanced. It will not ſooth any man in an evil way, that he may go on in it till his iniquity be found hateful; and thereby an advantage be gained againſt him.

Yea, we are to underſtand this manner of expreſſion, [that Charity doth *not take any pleaſure* in iniquity,] as ſignifying by a uſual figure of ſpeech, its being really *griev'd* and *ſorry* for it. "I beheld the tranſgreſſors, "and was grieved, becauſe they kept not "thy word [i]." Charity mourns in ſecret over the iniquities of others, and intercedes for mercy.

To proceed; Charity hath *no joy* in the *calamities* and *miſeries* that come upon any. This would be an iniquity in itſelf; and conſequently, he that loves God and his neighbour as he ought to do, cannot take part with thoſe, that expreſs a ſatisfaction in any man's ruin. *Job* diſclaims this, as a very corrupt and baſe turn of mind, "to re-"joice at the deſtruction of the very man "that *hated him*, or to lift up himſelf when

* *As the word* χαίρω *is moſt commonly uſed.*

[i] Pſal. cxix. 158.

" evil found him; neither (ſays he) have I ſuf-
" fered my mouth to ſin, by wiſhing a curſe
" to his ſoul [k]. To which agrees the advice of *Solomon*, " Rejoice not when thine ene-
" my falleth, and let not thine heart be glad
" when he ſtumbleth, leſt the LORD ſee it,
" and it diſpleaſe him [l]. "

The *next* property of Charity is, that it *rejoiceth in the Truth.*

If we underſtand the word, *Truth*, as it ſtands oppoſed to *iniquity* before-mentioned, then it may be explained by *righteouſneſs*. Every *act* of which, in contradiction to *iniquity*, either preventing evil, or ſuppreſſing it and taking it away, affords great joy and pleaſure to a charitable mind *. There is a gladneſs, to ſee men dealing truly and well with one another, and giving to each what is due. Charity takes a grateful ſhare in every *good* action, and in all *right* behaviour which it beholds.

If *truth* be underſtood (as it often is, where the word ſtands thus emphatically, *The Truth* [m],) of the *Goſpel doctrine* and *rule*; then the joy and ſatisfaction which Charity is here ſaid to have, ariſeth from the power and

[k] Job xxxi. 29, 30. [l] Prov. xxiv. 17, 18.
[m] 2 Cor. xiii. 8. Eph. i. 13. * Veritatem pro juſtitia poſuit, more ſcripturæ frequentato, &c. Poteſt hic intelligi juſtitia ſpecialis, ut ſenſus ſit, charitatem gratulari proximis quum videtur inter eos juſtitiam coli; id eſt, neminem lædi, ſed unicuique quod ſuum eſt attribui. Eſtius.

ſucceſs of the Goſpel, manifeſted in the lives of thoſe that are molded by it. Truth, in this ſenſe, gives perfect tranſport to a hearty Chriſtian. To ſee the Goſpel embraced by the *converſion* of men, and then exemplified in their *lives* and converſations, was St. *Paul*'s greateſt joy. Such is the Charity of *heaven*, to rejoice over the *converſion* of a ſinner. And ſuch is the joy over a returning *prodigal*, that the whole family on earth, are called to *feaſting* and *mirth* [n]. So that this cannot be left out of St. *Paul*'s notion of rejoicing in the truth.

Let that Apoſtle who was moſt eminent for Love and Charity, be conſulted, and we ſhall find *the Truth*, in both ſenſes, was the matter of his great joy. " I rejoiced great-" ly when the brethren came and teſtified of " the truth that is in thee, even as thou " walkeſt in the truth. I have no greater " joy than to hear that my children walk " in truth [o].

It is further to be obſerved here that the word rendered [*rejoiceth*] in this part of the deſcription of Charity, is different from that uſed in the former part of the *verſe*; and hath much beauty in the original *. Charity can ſhare no joy with the oppoſers of the Goſpel, or with the workers of iniquity; it has no pleaſure in any one's expoſing and

[n] Luke xv. 10, 23. [o] 3 Ep. John ver. 3, 4.
* Οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.

leſſening himſelf by ill behaviour. But it *congratulates*, and joys together with every one that walks aright. It takes all proper opportunities to ſhew the grateful ſympathy it hath with a ſincere good man, in every inſtance of his truth and integrity *.

Let what I am now going to ſay be carefully minded. Charity will not *ſuppreſs* the ſatisfaction it takes in another; nor will it withhold any encouragements, which the *diſcovery* of its *own joy* would give, to uſeful and beneficial actions or endeavours. As it thinketh no evil, ſo it will not imagine that another would grow proud, or vain-glorious, upon a kind approbation of him. For want of this rejoicing in and with others, many good works are laid aſide, or the very attempting of them hindered, and many good minds are diſcouraged and languiſh. "When "righteous men do rejoice, there is great "glory [p]." Their flowing together with united affections, and gratulations, produceth many glorious and happy events. For "when "it goeth well with the righteous, the city "rejoiceth; and by the bleſſing of the up-"right it is exalted [q].

The following property of Charity, is what naturally ariſeth from mutual joy and

* *In this caſe, St.* Paul *puts both the words together that are uſed here:* χάιρετε καὶ συγχάιρετέ μοι. Phil. ii. 18.

[p] Prov. xxviii. 12. [q] Prov. xi. 10, 11.

congra-

congratulations in and with *the Truth*; namely, a *bearing* with all manner of *faults* and *errors* that are not deſtructive of the truth rejoiced in. Our tranſlation ſays *beareth all things*; but it will better ſuit the original to read, Charity *covereth all things* *.

This ſenſe of the expreſſion, keeps the note of Charity here, diſtinct from that afterward, *endureth all things.* And is by far the moſt agreeable in connexion with Charity's *rejoicing* in the truth. As it hath a joyful voice to publiſh right and good things, and is ready every where to own and congratulate them; ſo it hath a *veil* to throw over all leſſening, derogating circumſtances, and to hide all tolerable imperfections. This is expreſſed ſometimes by a different word †, but the ſenſe ſeems to be the ſame. In the book of *Proverbs*, "Love covereth all ſins [r]: That is, all which can admit of a cover, or an apology to be made for them. Though they are very numerous, "Charity will cover "the multitude of ſins [s]."

Perfect Charity has a mother-like affection, to hide and cover the blemiſhes and faults of a child, whilſt all its excellences and advantages are ſet off and praiſed ‡. Some things that are really evil, yet if they are not cuſtomary and habitual, Charity will

* πάντα στέγει. *From the* Greek *verb* στέγω, *comes the* Latin *tego.* † Καλύπτει. [r] Prov. x. 12. [s] 1 Pet. iv. 8. ‡ *Therefore ſome read the word here* στέγει. Vid. Mill. Var. Lectiones.

endeavour

endeavour to cover.——Perhaps it was inadvertency, meer overſight.——Perhaps it was through wrong judgment, not ſeeing there was any evil in what was done, and if better informed he will not repeat it.——Perhaps it was ſome conſtraint, or ſudden provocation; not an act of the will and choice, but quite contrary to the ſettled intention.——Perhaps he is a true penitent, blaming himſelf more than I can blame him, and rather wants encouragements, than cenſures and rebukes. ——Perhaps, tho' ſome offences are repeated, yet that may be owing to *human frailty*, and not to any evil principle. Here Charity melts into compaſſion, very watchful that the truth and goodneſs which are in ſuch an one, be not injur'd for the ſake of any thing that is tolerable or pardonable. "Be "ye all of one mind, having compaſſion one "of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, "be courteous [t]."

It is highly requiſite, in this caſe, to add the caution or warning following. There may be grievous tranſgreſſion againſt the laws of love, in *ſpeaking* of men's faults even when we ſpeak nothing but what is *true*. A *readineſs* to report another's ſin, though it may be with ſome *ſavings*, and with an air of affection to the perſon, yet often ariſeth from a very ill cauſe, or is owing to ſome ill and *ſelfiſh deſign*. There are

[t] 1 Pet. iii. 8.

ſo

ſo many wrong things in the *beſt men*, or things which others will condemn as wrong without enquiring into circumſtances, and which ill minds will ſoon make *worſe* than they really are, that Charity will rather *cover*, than ſpeak them. This care is requiſite on two accounts; namely, to prevent ſhaming or hurting our brother, and to prevent the diſgrace of religion.

A further note of Charity is, it *believeth all things*.

Some have imagin'd this is no commendation, unleſs ſuch great credulity be wholly applied to God *. To believe all things we receive from men, is levity, and fooliſh ſimplicity, as the Scripture it ſelf teacheth. "The ſimple believeth every word [v]." Therefore St. *Auſtin* referring to this text ſaith, "Charity it ſelf that believeth all "things, yet doth not believe every ſpirit, but "only thoſe things that are according to the "ſpirit of God." No doubt this is the great rule by which Charity goes, in its belief of *men*. However, there is a faith that is *humane*; a faith of men, as well as a faith in God. And the applying it to men in this place, being of ſuch evident importance to rectify the diſorders and confuſions among the *Corinthians*, their Charity was to be ſhewn in *believing* one another, as well as in covering each other's defects and infirmities. The

* πάντα πιστεύει. [v] Prov. xiv. 15.

The ſenſe therefore is, Charity believeth all things ſo far as any good man can deſire credit ſhould be given to him, either for his own or other's good. Charity will believe that the man is what he *profeſſeth* to be, unleſs there be plain proof of the contrary. It will believe the things that he *relates* of himſelf or another, where there is no apparent inconſiſtency, or damage to any. It will believe all things right and well for the preſent, if they appear ſo, or are ſo reported. Charity will not look upon another as if he was *falſe*, or given to *lying* in his main character, without very juſt grounds. It will not, it cannot treat any one in chriſtian ſociety, as if he loved either to *make* or *report* a lie.

Nothing throws more diſorder into ſocieties of any kind, than a ſuſpicious unbelieving way of mens treating one another. From hence ariſe tumults, and long wranglings, before men can underſtand each other. From hence ariſe oaths, imprecations, and other evils, purely to gain credit. From hence ariſeth much hurtful reſervedneſs, and a watching the *trips* and miſtakes of one another, the more to expoſe them. And from this hardneſs to believe, many are provoked to throw off all concern whether they are believed or not, and ſo to make their advantage of deceiving wherever they can.

But this is not the way of *love*; for where there is an hearty affection, there is great readineſs

readineſs to believe a perſon, and to take every thing in the beſt manner. Hereby, Converſation is rendered eaſy, and things are tranſacted with more pleaſure in ſociety, than alone.

More eſpecially, Charity believeth all things that are ſaid to the *advantage* of another, with apparent inclination. Yea, it is diſpoſed, not only to *receive* the reports of what is favourable concerning its neighbour, but to *ſtrengthen* and *promote* them for a common benefit. In ſhort, Charity believeth all things that are good, and fit to be credited; while things that are evil are not received, till they are manifeſt and proved. There is no cure of wranglings and contempt in chriſtian ſocieties, without this inclination to credit one another; and to receive all good accounts of each other, both in what GOD has done *for* and *by* any member of the ſociety.

The attribute of Charity that ſtands next, is, that it *hopeth all things.*

This, again, ſome apply wholly to GOD. Such an extenſive hope they think ought not to be fixed any where elſe; for with GOD alone, *all things* are poſſible. By directing the hope to GOD and his promiſes in all things, no doubt but the workings of uncharitableneſs might be prevented or cured.

This was taken into our explication of the *firſt* attribute of Charity, ſo far as the other

exerciſes of it in this place ſuppoſe or require it; namely, its *long extent of mind* to a diſtant good, by which the ſoul is greatned and enlarged.

In the attribute now before us, the hoping all things muſt be applied to *men*, as well as the believing all things. But then it muſt be underſtood agreeably to the nature of *hope*. To hope all things, is therefore the ſame as if it had been ſaid, Charity *looketh for all good* from men. For hope in its own nature, is ſomething different from *meer expectation*. There may be great expectation in *fear*; but then it is the expectation of *evil*: Whereas hope hath an eye only to ſome *future good* *. To ſay therefore that Charity hopeth all things, is to ſay, that it looks upon men, and converſeth with them, in expectation of all that *is good* in their future conduct and behaviour, and in the final iſſue of all that concerns them †.

Whether we ſee our fellow Chriſtians in right ways and in a right ſpirit, or ſee them deviating from truth and goodneſs, yet Charity hopeth all good things. It hopeth from them that are good, that ſtill *greater* and *better* things will ariſe from their preſent goodneſs. And it hopeth from thoſe that fall into errors of mind or practice, that they may be recovered and ſet right.

Where

* Πάντα ἐλπίζει. Vid. Suicer. Theſaur. Eccleſiaſt.

† Hoc verbum præcipue reſpicit finem; aliquando autem reſpicit media quæ in finem ducunt. Diater.

Where there are any *excellent gifts* in another, the hope of greater uſefulneſs from them will excite a charitable man to encourage them, and to direct them well, and as far as he can to improve them. A fine paſſage, to this purpoſe, we have in the caſe of *Apollos*. His fervour of ſpirit, and diligence, and bold free way of ſpeaking, being obſerved by *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, "they took him "unto them [entertain'd him in the moſt friendly manner] "and expounded unto him "the way of GOD more perfectly [w]."

On the contrary, where the mind and heart are *dull*, and *ſlow* to believe or to receive inſtructions; yet Charity will imitate the love of *Chriſt* to his Diſciples, in *gradually* and *patiently* promoting their faith and knowledge. Where there is *perverſeneſs* and *prejudice*, Charity will expect the removal of ſuch evils, and will take all proper methods in order thereto. Yea, when there is *wickedneſs* and grievous iniquity, yet Charity will compaſſionate and *pray* for ſuch, not willing to deſpair, while GOD allows them ſpace and means for repentance. In all this there muſt be hope. For there will be no inſtructing, no patience, no prayer, without hope. Therefore to the keeping up of theſe, Charity hopeth all things. It hopeth that by one *means* or other, at one time or other, goodneſs will prevail. "The LORD make you

[w] Acts xviii. 25, 26.

"to increaſe and abound in love one toward "another, and toward all men [x]."

There is another ſenſe of the word here rendered [hopeth] in which it doubtleſs belongs to Charity: That is, in our future expectations from men, repoſing a *proper truſt* in them *. So far as God hath appointed any to *ſpecial offices* of truſt, Charity will place a becoming confidence in them. It will hope in their care and fidelity to diſcharge their truſt. Diſorders cannot be prevented or remedied in *ſocieties*, where there is not *hope enough* in the abilities and faithfulneſs of thoſe that are appointed to particular offices, to ſhew an affectionate and friendly reliance on them; or where they do not, on their parts, ſo far confide in the benevolence and good will of thoſe, that have choſen them to ſuch places of ſervice, as to act freely and ſteadily in them. And there muſt be a truſt exerciſed in one another, that every one will uſe his underſtanding, and yield his will to wiſdom and goodneſs, when he has things fairly and kindly ſet before him.

To all this, there is another property of Charity added, namely, it *endureth all things*.

The word here rendered *endureth* †, is alſo tranſlated *tarrieth*, and *abideth*. As

[x] 1 Theſſ. iii. 12. * ἐλπίζω ſpero, nonnunquam idem eſt ac *confido*. Steph. Theſ. Tom. 1. Col. 1198. ubi potius exponitur confido, vel exiſtimo, quam ſpero. Vid. Matth. xii. 21, John v. 45. 2 Cor. i. 7. † Πάντα ὑπομένει.

Jeſus

Jeſus *tarried* behind [y]: And *Silas* and *Timotheus abode* ſtill [z]. And in many places where it is tranſlated *endure*, it neceſſarily implies a *continuance* in ſuch a condition and in ſuch circumſtances, as required and called for a patient enduring. So when it is ſaid Chriſt *endured the croſs*, he not only ſuſtained the pain and ſhame which that death was attended with, but he *abode* under it for ſome time, when he could have called for legions of angels to reſcue him from it. And he *endured the contradiction* of ſinners againſt himſelf, not quitting his ſtation or deſign, on account of any ill uſage he met with [a]. So likewiſe in the caſe of ſervants being ſubject to froward and ill maſters, the word is twice uſed: "If when ye be buffeted for your faults ye "ſhall endure, what glory is there in this? "But if ye do well, and ſuffer notwithſtanding, and yet do endure, this is acceptable "with God [b]." Not to run away from ſuch enduring ſuffering circumſtances, but to do our duty in them, is a high proof of love and goodneſs.

When therefore it is ſaid Charity endureth all things, it implies that Charity *abideth*, or teacheth a man to *abide* in the place and ſtation where he is ſet*; ſuſtaining all things that

[y] Luke ii. 43. [z] Acts xvii. 14. [a] Heb. xii. 2, 3.
[b] 1 Pet. ii. 20. * *It is obſerved that the noun* ὑπομονή *is moſt commonly uſed for* permanency *or* perſeverance. Ipſa vocis etymologia oſtendit notare *permanentiam*: & quia hæc vox latinis auribus non placet *perſeverantiam* ſufficies, eamque intellige in quovis actu, vel etiam habitu. Diater.

that he is called to ſuffer in obedience to God, and for the ſervice of others. We are allowed indeed to avoid ſufferings by going from one city to another, if we can do this conſiſtently with our duty to God, and the ſervice to which he appoints us: But Charity will not break away from the work and ſtation aſſigned, becauſe it is attended with wants, reproaches, and afflictions, of various ſorts; conſidering that "if we "ſuffer with Chriſt [the word there is the ſame as in our text, if we *endure* with Chriſt] "we ſhall alſo reign with him [c]." So the Apoſtle ſaith of himſelf, what he here declares of Charity, "I endure all things for "the elects ſake, that they may alſo obtain "the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus with "eternal glory [d]." Charity will not fly away from an office or work to which God hath called any, whatever troubles may attend it.

Further, as this enduring muſt be with a firm and patient mind; ſo when it is applied to Charity in the full and complete notion of it, it ſignifies that Charity is very patient and calm under wrongs and injuries; very ſteady in bearing a good will to others, however they may revile or perſecute or even ſeek to deſtroy us. So the word is uſed in the epiſtle to the *Romans*, "patient in tribula-"tions [e]." Thus Chriſt endured; when

[c] 2 Tim. ii. 12. [d] Ibid. ver. 10. [e] Rom. xii. 12.

he was *reviled* not *reviling again*. Enduring all things in this ſenſe, is ſo undoubted a property of chriſtian Charity, that ſome have declared, He was not good himſelf, who was not able to tolerate evil men *. "He "that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved [f]."

Now let any man carefully conſider the account of the factions, animoſities, and diſorders of the *Corinthians*, and he will find this deſcription of Charity drawn up ſo as to be a complete and perfect remedy. And from thoſe very inſtances in which they were moſt faulty, we are moſt happily inſtructed. From their narrow and ſhort views and tempers, looking to *things preſent* more than to things *future* and eternal, (ſome of them going ſo far as to ſay, that there *is no reſurrection of the dead*) we are taught to be *great of mind*, and to keep our views and tempers extended beyond preſent trials and uneaſineſs. From their unkind treatment of the *poor*, ſending ſome away *hungry* from their ſuppers, when the rich were *drunken*, (with other things of the like nature,) Charity is recommended as *kind*, and *communicative*.

From their zeal about their particular *ſects*, and the *ſchiſms* occaſion'd hereby, the Apoſtle takes occaſion to record, that *Charity*

* Bonus non fuit, qui malos tolerare recuſavit. Vid. Eſtij comment. in loc. [f] Matth. x. 22.

doth

doth not *ſo zeal it*, or it *envieth not*. From their glorying in matters of *ſcience*, and deſpiſing the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and conteſting whoſe gifts ſhould be uppermoſt; 'tis declared, that where Charity prevails there is *no ſuch vaunting*. It is eaſy, from the accounts of their vain aſpirings, their ſwellings with *party pride*, or pride of their places and attainments in knowledge, to apply what is ſaid on Charity not *being puffed up*.

From the Apoſtle's ſettling the order of perſons, the preference of gifts, and particularly reproving them for the confuſion made by their different tongues and their great vanity on that account, we learn what it is for Charity not to *behave unſeemly*, not to ſeek *ſelf*, nor to fly into *fits of paſſion*. Their diſputes about eating things offered to idols, deſpiſing or condemning one another, and about their outward dreſs in the publick aſſemblies, makes it proper to declare that Charity *ſurmiſeth* not, *reaſoneth* not out, *imputeth* not evil.

From their rejoicing in things that were not good, yea in ſome things that were ſhamefully evil; (their fornications and notorious breaches of the rules of chaſtity; their litigious ſuits at law, and bearing down one another;) we may apply what is ſaid of Charity not *rejoicing in iniquity*. Their being tranſported with things that were more for ſhew and *oſtentation*, than real uſe; and with their

their advantages gained over this or the other party, more than in the ſucceſs of the Goſpel it ſelf, teach us what it is to *rejoice in the truth.*

Their *expoſing* one another's faults, and diſgracing one another's perſons, give juſt occaſion to ſay, that Charity on the contrary *would cover all things.* Their ill opinion, or evil ſuſpicions of each other, and the little credit that they had one with another, and their little expectation from one another, made it highly proper to ſay, that Charity *believeth* all things, and *hopeth* all things. And then in the midſt of ſuch troubles occaſioned by themſelves, and the reproaches caſt upon Chriſtianity by its enemies, and the perſecutions they were expoſed to, it might well be added that *Charity endureth all things.*

Laſtly, There is one note more; *viz.* that where the foregoing properties of Charity are found, it cannot *fail* or *periſh.* Charity never *faileth.* It do's not become *fruitleſs*, it is not *fruſtrated* or diſappointed, as ſome underſtand the word here uſed *.

Charity's not failing, is oppoſed to the *evacuating* of propheſies, when all their meaning ſhall be fully drawn out; and to the *ceaſing* of tongues, when both thoughts and their objects ſhall be clearly and openly

* Ἐκπίπτει.

manifeſt; and to *ſcience vaniſhing away*, when all our forms and ſhadows of reaſoning ſhall be ſwallowed up in that light and knowledge which ſhall come more immediately from GOD. Therefore to ſay Charity *faileth not*, is to intend and mean, that Charity can never be exhauſted, never uſeleſs, never deſtroy'd.

It do's not give out, or tire in this life: And if it can bear up againſt continual oppoſitions and difficulties here, it ſhall not ceaſe for ever. The exerciſes of it in the preſent world, are very different from what they will be in the next, where ſins, and wants, and miſeries cannot come: But the grace it ſelf will be increaſed, and perfected in heaven.

I cloſe this account, with the concluding verſe of this chapter; *now abideth faith, hope, charity, theſe three* [when the other three things fail, *viz.* prophecy, tongues, and ſcience;] but the *greateſt of theſe is charity*.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of Mercy or Charity with reſpect to ſins.

TO render the foregoing general deſcription of Charity particularly uſeful, we muſt apply the *properties* of it to the various circumſtances and trials of life. Conſidering our ſelves as in a world of diſorder and *ſin*, we ſhould endeavour to act with that greatneſs and goodneſs of mind that ſhall always make the beſt of things, and endeavour to remedy what is amiſs. And becauſe there are many and great *differences* about religion it ſelf, the beſt thing in this world, we muſt be ſure to carry every attribute of Charity into our profeſſion and practice of it. The *wants* and afflictions that diſtreſs any of thoſe about us, will alſo call for a continual exerciſe of Charity in all its kind and benevolent diſpoſitions. And with all the great uncharitableneſs and enmity that we meet with from others, will require our ſtudying the perfection of this grace. Of theſe in their order.

It is a very great part of Charity, to carry it well with reference to the *ſins* and *offences* that are in the world. "Charity ſhall [or will] "cover a multitude of ſins [g]."

[g] 1 Pet. iv. 8.

This covering a multitude of ſins may be conſidered, either with reference to the ſins of other men, or the hiding, and taking away the ſcandal and puniſhment due to a man's *own* ſins. Charity with reference to the ſins and faults of others, will make us careful to avoid their ſins our ſelves; and will alſo cover many ſins that we are guilty of, by engaging the mercy both of GOD and man towards us.

The conduct and effects of Charity as to *other mens* ſins, are now to be explained. And as our Saviour hath laid a mighty ſtreſs upon this, and many directions are given us in ſcripture with reference to it, and the preſent ſtate of the world calling us daily to the practice of it, we may well fill up this ſection in a ſerious conſideration of this important branch of Charity.

1. It is a part of love and mercy to *prevent* ſins breaking out, as far as we are able.

If we ſee our neighbour or brother in any circumſtances of temptation and danger that are like to prove too hard for him, a true affection will put us upon doing all that we can, in a friendly and chriſtian way, to remove ſuch ſnares. "As Chriſt himſelf "was tempted that he might be able to ſuc-"cour them that are tempted [h]." So when we ſee others under the power of any ſoli-

[h] Heb. ii. 18.

citations

citations, or evil examples, or under the biaſs of any corrupt affections or paſſions, which have proved grievous to our ſelves, Charity will teach us to do all we can to break the ſnare, and prevent their ſinning.

Our Saviour warning *Peter* of his dreadful fall, and telling him withal, "that he pray-"ed for him that his faith might not fail;" immediately directs him to make a charitable uſe of it, for the aſſiſtance and help of others: "When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren [i]."

Reuben did what he could to prevent the ſin of his brethren in the caſe of *Joſeph*; "ſpake I not unto you, ſaying, Do not ſin "againſt the child [k]?" Where any one ſees another falling into iniquity, and will not interpoſe, when he might reaſonably hope to prevent the progreſs of evil, he is counted a *hater* of his brother. He is in a temper quite contrary to that of Charity. "Thou "ſhalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: "thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neigh-"bour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him [l].

Could you bear to ſee a perſon you truly loved, go into company that would deſtroy him? Or taking a road where he was like to fall into the hands of *thieves* that would ſtrip and abuſe him? Or going into a *peſt-houſe* and place of infection? Would you not do your utmoſt to perſuade and carry him another

[i] Luke xxii. 32. [k] Gen. xlii. 22. [l] Levit. xix. 17.

way?

way? In like manner, chriſtian Charity will put you upon doing all you can to reſcue from ſinful company, and from all the infection of vice and corruption, and from the plunders and havock to which ſin expoſeth thoſe that are within the reach of your charitable perſuaſions. "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, leſt "any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin [m]."

What a multitude of iniquities may be covered and kept under, by this exerciſe of Charity? The contrary temper may do much hurt. Jealouſy, pride, paſſion, reproach and irritating any one's ſpirit, may provoke to ſin, inſtead of preventing it. But Charity will turn the very heart and ſoul of one who is only a beginner in evil, and win him over to wiſer and better ſentiments.

2. If men are drawn into ſin through ignorance or frailty; (and contrary to their wills, and by the violence of temptation;) then it is the part of Charity to *compaſſionate them*, and make the moſt merciful *apologies* for them.

Jeſus Chriſt expreſt a Charity, moſt aſtoniſhing, to thoſe that were committing one of the worſt ſins that ever was committed upon earth, even ſhedding his own moſt precious blood. And he makes the moſt merciful apology for it: "Father, forgive

[m] Heb. iii. 13.

"them;

" them; for they know not what they do [n]. "
In like manner the Apoſtle ſpeaks to the *Jews*; " Through ignorance ye did it, as " did alſo your rulers [o]. "

Where any ſin is owing to a common and univerſal depravity of human nature, the apology is ſufficient only to put every man upon a humble impartial reflecting on what he knows of himſelf. " He that is without " ſin, let him caſt the firſt ſtone [p]. "

And as to Charity towards them that are carried into any evil unawares, and contrary to their known practice and reſolutions, *that* one place is inſtead of a thouſand, " If a man " be overtaken in a fault, ye which are " ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit " of meekneſs [q]. " This may belong alſo to the next part of Charity with reference to the ſins of men; namely,

3. When duty or ſpecial occaſions oblige us to convict others of ſin, Charity will then give the *beſt counſel* it can, and take all proper ſteps to mend the offender.

Our Saviour ſpake a *parable* on purpoſe to ſhew the regard which there ought to be for recovering *one* loſt or ſtraying ſoul: And tells us, " that the Son of man is come to ſave " that which was loſt; and adds, that it is " not the will of your Father who is in hea-

[n] Luke xxiii. 34. [o] Acts iii. 17. [p] John viii. 7.
[q] Gal. vi. 1.

" ven,

" ven, that the leaſt ſoul ſhould periſh [r]. " Upon which occaſion he gives direction how to act in our counſelling and ſeeking to recover a treſpaſſing brother. " If thy " brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and " tell him his fault between thee and him " alone. " Let thy firſt care be to adviſe and amend him, not to reproach and expoſe him: " If he ſhall hear thee thou haſt gain- " ed thy brother; but if he will not hear " thee, then take with thee one or two more, " that in the mouth of two or three wit- " neſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed [s]. "

True Love and Charity will not give up a treſpaſſer upon a ſingle application to him, but will try what may be done by calling in the aſſiſtance of *two* or *three* friends more. " And if he ſhall neglect to hear " them, tell it to the church. " After private affection and Charity hath done all it can to reclaim an offender, try what all the methods of Piety and Charity in chriſtian communions and ſocieties may be able to do, before any ſoul is given up as incorrigible. " But if he neglect to hear the church, let " him be unto thee as an heathen man and " a publican [t]. " Let him not be burnt, or murdered, or impriſoned, and deprived of all he hath; but ſtill let him enjoy all that a heathen man or a publican, as a member of ſociety, hath a right unto. Let there be a

[r] Matth. xviii. 11, 14. [s] Ibid ver. 15, 16. [t] Ibid. 17.

general

general Charity to the worſt of offenders, in leaving them to the final judgment of GOD; and content your ſelves in withdrawing that *ſpecial* affection, and care, which as Chriſtians you owe to one another; and be ſeparate from all ſuch in your converſation and the intimacies of life, as you would from a publican or a heathen.

This whole proceſs being founded upon the Son of man's coming to "ſave that "which was loſt," and being plainly calculated for the ſalvation, not the miſery or ruin of men, ought to be thus interpreted as a proceſs of Charity, and ſhould not be carried to proſecutions in a way of power, ſeverity and cruelty. "If any do err from "the truth, and one convert him; let him "know that he, which converteth a ſinner "from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a "ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multi-"tude of ſins[v]."

4. Charity will bear a great while with, and *endure* a great deal from the ſins and frailties of others, before it will account the caſe deſperate.

So in the forequoted deſcription of Charity, St. *Paul* ſays, "that it beareth [or covereth] "all things; believeth all things; "hopeth all things; endureth all things[w]." True love will not only make the ſpirit

[v] Jam. v. 19, 20. [w] 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 7.

kind, and inclinable to do good; but patient in bearing with things that are diſagreeable and contrary to it. It will make one cover the faults of others, and bear with their miſtakes, and ſins, as patiently and tenderly as we do with *our own.* It will incline us ſtill to believe and hope the beſt, as far as there is any ground for it; and to go on enduring, as long as there is any proſpect of things being better. But this Charity ſhould not, from theſe characters of it, be counted *fooliſh*, as if it did not *ſee* faults; for then, where would the *covering* and *enduring* be? Nor is it *ſtupid*, ſo as not to be grieved for them, and to try the amendment of them; for if ſo, where would its *kindneſs*, and its *hoping* all things be? Nor is it to be ſuppoſed that the acts and exerciſes of Charity are to *continue* where they are wilfully abuſed, and perpetually diſappointed; for this would be contrary to the directions given under the foregoing particular. But yet the temper of Charity, benevolence and good will, ought invincibly to be preſerved.

The matter being thus explained, we are to ſet this amongſt the never failing rules of Charity; namely, "put on (as the elect of "God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercy, "kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, "long-ſuffering: Forbearing one another, "and forgiving one another [x]." This is

[x] Coloſſ. iii. 12, 13.

the

the way to overcome the ſins of men; and to gain upon them in the moſt effectual manner, to diſguſt and forſake their tranſgreſſions.

But having mentioned *forgiveneſs* in the laſt text of ſcripture, That may be further conſidered by it ſelf.

5. Charity will *forgive* many and great offences.

In caſe of perſonal injuries it is expreſsly required, "That if any man have a quarrel "againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo "alſo do ye [y]." And our bleſſed Lord carries this matter ſo far, as to order, that "if "thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there "remembereſt that thy brother hath ought "againſt thee, thou muſt leave thy gift be-"fore the altar, and firſt go and be recon-"ciled to thy brother, then come and offer "thy gift [z]." This forgiveneſs as a fruit of Charity, is ſo ſtrongly inforced, that nothing can bind it more upon Chriſtians, than theſe words of our Saviour do: "If ye for-"give not men their treſpaſſes, neither will "your Father forgive your treſpaſſes [a]." He that hath not the ſpirit of love in this inſtance, of forgiving others, ſhall not himſelf find forgiveneſs with God.

But you will obſerve, that this exerciſe of Charity comes after all attempts to recover a perſon from his ſins and offences. It is

[y] Coloſſ. iii. 13. [z] Matth. v. 23, 24. [a] Matth. vi. 15.

not kindneſs, it is not chriſtian Charity, to forgive faults committed againſt us, without *firſt* endeavouring to make the offender ſenſible and penitent. "If thy brother treſpaſs "againſt thee, rebuke him; and if he re- "pent, forgive him; and if he treſpaſs "againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſe- "ven times in a day turn again to thee, ſay- "ing I repent, thou ſhalt forgive him [b]." The repetition of acts of forgiveneſs is carried yet further in that place where *Peter* is ſaid to come and ask our Lord, "How oft "ſhall my brother ſin againſt me and I for- "give him? till ſeven times? Jeſus ſaith "unto him, I ſay not unto thee till ſeven "times, but until ſeventy times ſeven [c]." And then follows one of the moſt moving parables that could be contrived, to promote this forgiving ſpirit. The ſcope of which is to ſhew, that the moſt we are capable of forgiving to one another, compared with the forgiveneſs of thoſe many and great offences we expect from GOD, is but like the forgiving a debt of a *few pence*, compared with a debt of a *thouſand talents*. And if God's readineſs to forgive us our frequently repeated, and our greateſt ſins, will not move us to compaſſionate the ſmaller and fewer tranſgreſſions of a fellow ſervant, 'tis juſt we ſhould fall into the *tormentor's hands*, till we pay all that is due to the great Lord and

[b] Luke xvii. 3, 4. [c] Matth. xviii. 21, 22.

Proprietor

Proprietor both of us and our fellow-ſervant [d].

Upon this is founded that general rule for Chriſtians forgiving one another, which muſt ever be ſet amongſt the principal directions for Charity; namely, "be ye kind one to "another, tender hearted, forgiving one an-"other, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath "forgiven you [e].

6. Charity will *ſupport* and *comfort* thoſe who fall into *overmuch* ſhame and ſorrow for their ſins.

He that was ordered to be caſt out of the church at *Corinth*, for inceſt with his father's wife [f], falling afterwards into a grievouſly afflicted and deſolate condition, the Apoſtle writes to the *Corinthians*, "rather to "*forgive* him and *comfort* him, leſt perhaps "he ſhould be ſwallowed up with over-"much ſorrow [g]." Where ſhame and ſorrow do not only make a man *quit his ſin*, but make him afterward deſpondent and *uſeleſs*, and threatens the utter breaking and deſtruction of his *ſpirit*; there Charity will pour in all its healing balms, and will cordial the heart with the beſt views it can give of the love of GOD and Chriſt, and will ſhew all the compaſſions of a Chriſtian to ſuch as are truly penitent and contrite. See 2 *Cor.* i. 4. "Comfort them that are in any trou-"ble". That

[d] Matth. xviii. from ver. 25. to the end.
[e] Epheſ. iv. 32. [f] 1 Cor. v. 1. [g] 2 Cor. ii. 7.

That ſpirit of Love and Charity with which Chriſt was anointed, is in ſome meaſure imparted to all true Chriſtians, " to bind " up the broken-hearted, and to declare the " opening of the priſon to them that are " bound [h]." Therefore the apoſtolical direction is, " comfort the feeble-minded, ſup- " port the weak, be patient toward all " men [i]."

7. Charity will avoid all *needleſs talk* of any perſons faults and miſcarriages.

It is moſt oppoſite to that temper which covereth a multitude of ſins, to go about publiſhing and magnifying of them.

When *Joſeph*, the ſuppoſed father of Chriſt, thought the Virgin he had eſpouſed an *ill woman*, becauſe ſhe was found with child before they came together; yet it is ſaid, " he was not willing to make her a pub- " lick example [k]."

A man of a juſt and charitable ſpirit, will never make any crimes more publick, than is neceſſary to free himſelf from ſharing in the guilt of them, or from being injured by them. " He that uttereth ſlander " is a fool [l]: And " he that ſpeaketh evil " of his brother, and judgeth his brother, " ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the " law [m]." Becauſe the law expreſsly forbids

[h] Iſaiah lxi. 1. [i] 1 Theſſ. v. 14. [k] Matth. i. 18, 19.
[l] Prov. x. 18. [m] Jam. iv. 11.

the

the ſpeaking of, and publiſhing, ill ſtories: "Thou ſhalt not go up and down as a tale-"bearer amongſt thy people [n]."

Juſtice and *equity* would ſuppreſs a great many reproaches and back-bitings, as was ſhewn under that head; but the law of kindneſs will do much more. And certainly that ought to be looked upon as a part of the character of every true Chriſtian, which *Solomon* makes the character of every virtuous and right ſpirited woman; "She openeth "her mouth with wiſdom, [not with raſhneſs, and clamour] "and in her tongue is "the law of kindneſs [o]. The lips of the "righteous know what is acceptable; but "the mouth of the wicked ſpeaketh fro-"wardneſs [p]."

8. Charity will therefore diſlike to *hear* the ſins and faults of men needleſsly *publiſhed by others*, as well as *avoid* every ſlander and ill report it ſelf.

Thus *David* reſolves, not only that a froward heart ſhould *depart* from him; but he immediately adds, he would not *know*, or be *intimate* with any perſon of ſuch a make. "Whoſo privily ſlandereth his neighbour, "him will I cut off: Him that hath an "high look and a proud heart, will I not "ſuffer [q]."

[n] Levit. xix. 16. [o] Prov. xxxi. 26. [p] Ibid. x. 32.
[q] Pſal. ci. 4, 5.

Solomon adviſes not to mind the words of thoſe that utter things in perverſe humours, though they ſhould be carried to *curſe us*, conſidering that we in ſome ſuch diſorders of mind and temper may probably have carried it in a like manner to ſome others. "Take no heed unto all words that are "ſpoken, leſt thou hear thy ſervant curſe "thee. For oftentimes alſo thine heart "knoweth, that thy ſelf likewiſe haſt curſed others [r]." Chriſtianity directs us to diſcountenance, as perſons that have caſt off their *firſt faith*, "ſuch as learn to be idle, "wandering about from houſe to houſe; "and not only idle, but tattlers alſo and "buſy-bodies, ſpeaking things which they "ought not [s]."

9. Charity will ever be careful not to make *one man's* ſins, an occaſion of *beſpattering others.*

A vile and moſt unrighteous practice, This; yet ſhamefully in uſe, and even gloried in among us. Becauſe this and the other man or woman, that makes a great ſhew of religion, may be found guilty of ſome baſe crimes, therefore every body that makes a like profeſſion muſt be evil ſpoken of. Or becauſe ſome men in this and the other kind of publick ſtations, are ſeekers of themſelves, and mercenary, and corrupt, therefore every

[r] Eccleſ. vii. 21. 22. [s] 1 Tim. v. 13.

one

one who is in ſuch a ſtation, and imployed in ſuch a ſervice, is repreſented as acting with the ſame narrow and ſinful views. Where is that Charity that *hopeth* all things, and of conſequence would be ready to ſay, though many are ſo bad, yet we hope all are not ſo? Where is that Charity that will believe and think the beſt of all others concerning whom we *know* no evil, however we condemn thoſe whoſe ſins are *manifeſt* and proved to us? It is not only againſt Charity, but againſt common ſenſe and common humanity, to deſpiſe one magiſtrate, or miniſter, or ſerious Chriſtian, becauſe another that you might once think as well of, has proved quite contrary to your expectations. There can be nothing of that Charity, that hides and covers a multitude of ſins, where men pleaſe themſelves in carrying things beyond truth, and fact. Where they ſtab the reputations of faithful and diligent, kind and generous ſouls, for the crimes and corruptions of falſe idle and worldly-minded men.

Charity *thinketh no evil* where it *ſees* none, and can *prove* none. Yea though ſome things may have an appearance of evil, Charity will not paſs ſentence without a careful conſidering and enquiring into them. "Judge "not according to the *appearance*, but judge "righteous judgment [t]."

[t] John vii. 24.

Laſtly, Charity will *pray* for the pardon of *all ſin*, and for the *healing* and *converting* the ſouls of *ſinners*.

" Confeſs your faults one to another, and " pray one for another that ye may be heal- " ed [v]. Forgive thy people that have ſinned " againſt thee, and all their tranſgreſſions " wherein they have tranſgreſſed againſt " thee [w]. " St. *Paul* tells his *Corinthians*, " now I pray to *God* that ye do no evil [x]. "

And when he was deſerted through unfaithfulneſs or unkindneſs, he prays to " GOD, that ſuch as forſook him might not " have it laid to their charge [y]. " Yea thoſe that were under many ſad marks of infidelity, ignorant of GOD's righteouſneſs, and ſetting themſelves againſt the Goſpel, yet were prayed for by that great Apoſtle. " My " heart's deſire and prayer to GOD for *Iſ-* " *rael* is, that they may be ſaved [z]. "

Charity knows no reſtraint, in praying for mercy to all ſorts of ſinners, and for pardon of all kind of ſins, unleſs it be in ſuch a caſe as that mentioned by St. *John* when he ſays, " There is a ſin unto death; I do " not ſay that ye ſhall pray for it [a]. " And there ſeems alſo to be a limitation in the words immediately foregoing; " If any man " ſee his brother ſin a ſin which is not unto

[v] Jam. v. 16. [w] 1 Kings viii. 50. [x] 2 Cor. xiii. 7.
[y] 2 Tim. iv. 16. [z] Rom. x. 1. [a] 1 John v. 16.

" death,

" death, he ſhall ask, and he ſhall give him " life for them that ſin not unto death. "

To underſtand this place aright, may be of ſome importance; becauſe, in it ſelf, it ſeems ſo difficult to determine when a perſon ſins unto death, and when not; and alſo becauſe ſome very hard and uncharitable ſenſes have been put upon it. In the verſes foregoing the Apoſtle had ſpoken with great aſſurance of the ſucceſs of prayer. " This is " the confidence that we have in him, that " if we ask any thing according to his will " he heareth us [b]. " And then, from this aſſurance of GOD's hearing prayer in general, he argues that there may be a proportionable hope of ſucceſs in *particular* and *ſpecial petitions* which are offered, when they ſuit with the will of GOD.——If we know that he hears us whatever we ask in the general, we know that we have the petitions, more ſpecially and particularly deſired of him, provided they are formed aright, and we qualified as the great *Hearer* of prayer requires. Inſomuch that a prayer put up for a *particular perſon*, and in a particular *time* of ſin and danger, may be heard ſpecially on his account; as well as thoſe prayers which are offered by general Charity, in which he may ſhare together with all that are in like circumſtances.

Upon this, the particular caſe of praying

[b] 1 John v. 14.

for a *man's life* is brought in as an inſtance; which the Apoſtle tells us may be determined after this manner. "That if any man ſee "his brother ſin a ſin which is not unto "death;" that is, if he hath offended ſo as to fall into ſome great affliction and danger, but not ſo as to be condemned to death by any juſt ſentence of the magiſtrate, nor by an expreſs threatning and appointment of the law of GOD, let a believing fervent prayer be offered unto GOD to take away the puniſhment of ſin, that it may not prove mortal, and "GOD ſhall give him life for them "that ſin not unto death." That is, for them that do not perſiſt in ſin, or *finiſh it* in that ſenſe that brings forth death [c]. But there is a ſin by which life is forfeited to publick juſtice, and in which men may be ſo hardened againſt all the means of repentance, and become deſpiſers of the preſent patience and goodneſs of GOD in Chriſt; "I do not ſay that ye ſhall pray for it." A figurative way of ſpeaking, by which more is intended than is expreſſed; namely, that there is no manner of encouragement to pray for life in ſuch caſes, nor any hope of ſucceſs.

This place doth not therefore directly and immediately ſpeak concerning the *eternal ſtate* of men, but concerning particular prayer for the reſtoration of this *temporal* life.

[c] Jam. i. 15.

And even in caſes where that is not to be prayed or hoped for, yet Charity will pray for mercy to ſuch in another world; and will commit them to GOD, as knowing that his mercy can do wonders for ſouls, even in the laſt moments. St. *John*, who was ſo eminent a preacher of love, could never deſign to hinder the exerciſe of Charity, in the laſt and greateſt proofs of it, that one ſoul can give another. Charity will pray for dying, as well as for living ſinners.

Thus I have ſet before you the ſeveral branches of Charity which relate to *ſins*.

SECTION IV.

Of Mercy or Charity with reſpect to differences *in* Religion.

WE are as expreſsly taught, by the word of GOD, to exerciſe Charity in matters of religion, as in caſes of frailty and weakneſs in common life. Differences in religion call for this grace, as much as any other differences amongſt men, and on ſome accounts more; becauſe the want of kind allowances here, makes men more violent in their conceits and oppoſitions to one another. The preſent ſtate of the chriſtian world requires

quires a very careful diligent ſtudy and practice of this branch of Charity. It may be explained from Scripture rules in the particulars following.

1. Charity in matters of religion will allow for the *different capacities* and *abilities* of men.

This was provided for in the *Jews* religion. Since God was pleaſed to communicate one meaſure of wiſdom, or one kind and degree of knowledge to one perſon, when he gave a lower degree, or different kind of wiſdom and knowledge to another, it was ordered ſo that they might learn to eſteem and honour each other, as receiving their different endowments from God for the common good. Thus we read of God's putting it in the hearts of ſome to *deviſe curious works*, filling them with the Spirit of wiſdom underſtanding and knowledge, in *all manner* of workmanſhip. Others had capacities only to *execute* particular parts of the plans or devices laid before them. But they were each of them taught to own the gifts of God to the other; and to unite their ſeveral abilities in the ſervice of religion [d].

Chriſtianity makes the like proviſion for men's allowing theſe differences of *genius*. And alſo for thoſe *peculiar qualities* in each other, that one might be as an *eye* or *ſenſe*,

[d] Exod. xxxv. 31, &c. with Chap. xxxvi. begin.

another

another as a *limb* or *member*, and that either more or leſs *honourable*, in the ſame body. But no one of theſe was to boaſt it ſelf againſt another, as if it ſtood in no need of it; nor to deſpiſe it, becauſe of the different purpoſes it was made to ſerve. "For the bo-"dy is not one member, but many[e]." This is expreſsly applied to *political* bodies, as well as to the body *natural*; and to *religious ſocieties*, as well as to other ſocieties of men. Yea in a more eſpecial manner it belongs to the members of Chriſt's church, as they are animated like one body by one common ſoul and ſpirit, and ſo made ſpiritually the body of Chriſt: "For by one ſpi-"rit we are all baptized into one body, whe-"ther we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, whether we "be bond or free." And in the conſtitution of this body, as well as of our natural bodies, "God hath ſet the members every one of "them in the body as it hath pleaſed him: "And the eye cannot ſay unto the hand, I "have no need of thee; nor again the head to "the feet, I have no need of you; nay much "more thoſe members of the body which "ſeem to be more feeble are neceſſary; and "thoſe that we think to be leſs honourable, "have yet an abundant honour beſtowed up-"on them. God hath ſo tempered the body "together, that the members ſhould have "the ſame care one of another. And whe-

[e] 1 Cor. xii. 14.

"ther

"ther one member ſuffer all the members "ſuffer with it: Or one member be honour-"ed, all the members rejoice with it. *Thus* "ye are the body of Chriſt, and members "in particular[f]."

Whoever carefully attends to this one place of Scripture, will find ſuch a compariſon made between a natural body, and body *corporate*, (be it a civil or religious ſociety) that the different *capacities*, and *qualities*, and uſes of each member of the ſociety, ought to be as much conſidered and allowed for, as the different qualities and powers and parts of the body natural. And the moſt curious part of the body, cannot but value and ſympathize with the meaneſt.

Hence it is that our Saviour hath given it as a ſtanding rule for the conduct of all his diſciples, "Take heed that ye deſpiſe "not one of *theſe little ones*. Whoſoever "ſhall humble himſelf as a little child, the "ſame is great in the kingdom of Heaven. "And whoſo ſhall receive one ſuch little "child in my name, (he adds) receiveth me[g]."

2. Charity will allow for different *educations*, as well as for different natural powers and capacities.

Some things may be ſo deeply planted and rivetted by education, that though the faith of God, and embracing the religion taught

[f] 1 Cor. xii. 13, 18, 21,—27. [g] Matth. xviii. 4, 5, 10.

by

by the ſacred Scriptures, may govern the *main* of a man's life, and have the principal forming of his ſpirit and temper, yet there will be a retaining ſome *education-habits* or principles.

A notable inſtance of this, we have in the caſe of *Naaman* the *Syrian*; who ſolemnly thus engaged himſelf from the time of his being cured of his *leproſy*; "Thy ſervant "henceforth will offer neither burnt-offer- "ing nor ſacrifice unto other *gods*, but unto "*Jehovah*." Yet he adds to this engage- ment one *proviſo*; "In this thing the Lord "pardon thy ſervant, that when my maſter "goeth into the houſe of *Rimmon* to wor- "ſhip there, and he leaneth on my hand, "and I bow my ſelf in the houſe of *Rim-* "*mon*: When I bow my ſelf in the houſe "of *Rimmon*, the Lord pardon thy ſervant "in this thing. And the Prophet ſaid, "Go in peace [h]."

St. *Paul* repreſents Chriſtianity as making very great allowances for the different educa- tion of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. He would have *Timothy*, as a *Jew*, to be circumciſed [i]. But he would by no means have the *Gentile* Chriſtians to come under this yoke. "I "*Paul* ſay unto you, that if ye be circum- "ciſed, Chriſt ſhall prophet you nothing [k]." For this is to make yourſelves *Jews*, by com-

[h] 2 Kings v. 17, 18. [i] Acts xvi. 3. [k] Gal. v. 2, 3.

plying with a cuſtom that makes you debtors to the whole Law. The Apoſtle tells us, that in his own practice, he had ſuch a tenderneſs for men according to the ſettled courſe of their education, that he rather choſe to fall in with them as far as he could with ſafety and integrity as a Chriſtian, than to hinder the ſucceſs of the Goſpel, by oppoſing ſettled rules and cuſtoms in religion. "To the *Jews* I became as a *Jew*, that I "might gain the *Jews*; to them that are un-"der the law, as under the law, that I might "gain them that are under the law: To "them that are without the law, [or divine revelation, I went upon principles of reaſon and natural conſcience] "as without any poſi-"tive law from GOD, that I might gain "thoſe who are without law." Though at the ſame time I neither liv'd nor preach'd as without a revealed law my ſelf, "but "under the law to Chriſt [l]." And upon this charitable practice, he grounds that general rule, "Give none offence, neither to "the *Jews*, nor to the *Gentiles*, nor to the "church of God [m].

The practice of this branch of Charity in our day, conſiſts, in allowing for the different uſe of men's underſtandings, and different impreſſions on their memories fixing things in their minds; and for the different *cuſtoms*

[l] 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21. [m] 1 Cor. x. 32.

which

which perſons have been uſed to from their infancy. Not placing the chriſtian religion, in bringing all men to one particular way; but in loving the Lord Chriſt in ſincerity, and loving one another as he has ſet us an example; allowing for the biaſs of education where we ſee an honeſt ſerious mind, and where there is a ſteddy deſire to pleaſe GOD in thoſe ways which are judged moſt agreeable to his will, and which men think moſt reaſonable in themſelves, and ſuited to their good. Only this we ought to take along with us, that theſe allowances of Charity by no means belong to them that forſake one or other way of religion, for the *love of this preſent world*; or who ſhew themſelves to be of *childiſh* and *inconſiſtent*, of perverſe and froward minds. They that conceit they know any thing, ſo as to juſtify or excuſe them in ſuch a conduct, know nothing ye as they ought to know. But

3. Charity in matters of religion will allow for different kinds and degrees of *impreſſion* from GOD, and from the *world to come*. Some may have impreſſions ſtrong enough to carry them into the nobleſt *ſervices*, and into eminent *dangers* too, for the ſake of GOD and religion. Others may have impreſſions only ſtrong enough to carry them on in an obſcure and hidden way, under fears of calamities and troubles, and dread of death,

all along their chriſtian courſe [n]. Some may have diſcoveries of the other world, ſo great and clear, that none of the things of this preſent life greatly move them: While others may frequently be taken up with preſent cares and enjoyments, ſo as to loſe ſight of heaven, and ſo that they cannot raiſe their ſpirits again after ſuch a loſs without great difficulty.

The Scripture plainly, though variouſly, deſcribes theſe impreſſions from above. In one place it is ſaid "there is a ſpirit in man, "and the inſpiration of the Almighty giveth "underſtanding [o]." There is a communication of light, and vigor, and goodneſs, to ſome minds, from the great parent-mind, very different to what there is to others. The ſpirit that GOD hath placed in man becomes wiſer and better, in ſeveral degrees, as it is more or leſs bleſt with a *divine afflatus*. In the language of the New Teſtament it is called GOD's *drawing* men; and our Saviour's *manifeſting himſelf* to ſome as he doth *not unto others* in the world [p]. It is called an *inhabiting* of the Deity, after ſome peculiar and diſtinguiſhing manner [q]. It is deſcribed by the *Holy Ghoſt*'s teaching, leading, eſtabliſhing and comforting; as oppoſed to the condition of thoſe, who are led by the GOD of this world, and from

[n] Heb. ii. 15. [o] Job xxxii. 8. [p] John xiv. 21, 22.
[q] Ibid. 23.

whom

whom the Spirit of God departs and is withdrawn.

What the *French* call the *unction* in their publick ſpeakers; the clearneſs and luſtre of their thoughts, and the force of perſuaſion, and the inſinuating power of their expreſſions; and whatever elſe they mean by that word, which diſtinguiſhes one, from another; that is in Scripture applied to all ſuch as ſhine in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, when others depart from it, and loſe their once ſeeming excellency and glory. "They "went out from us (ſays St. *John*) but they "were not of us. For if they had been of "us, they would no doubt have continued. "But they went out, that they might be "made manifeſt, that they were not all of "us: But ye have an unction from the Holy "One, and ye know all things [1]." To this unction (whatever it is) from the Holy One, the diſtinguiſhing conſtancy and piety of Chriſtians, is there aſcribed, with their clear and extenſive knowledge of divine things.

Something of this divine afflatus, this manifeſtation of Chriſt as he is not manifeſted to the world, this preſence and guidance of the Holy-Ghoſt, this unction from the Holy One; take one or all the expreſſions, ſomething of what is intended by theſe things (I ſay) muſt be in every good man, and true

[1] 1 John ii. 19, 20.

Chriſtian.

Chriſtian. For it is in this way, upon fervent Prayer to God, that he is made an inward thorough Chriſtian, and becomes perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.

But Charity will allow for very different degrees of theſe heavenly and divine impreſſions; ſince the loweſt of them may bring a perſon into the goſpel kingdom, though not into that uſeful and advanced ſtate there, to which ſome others may be called and ſuited.

Hence it is that the diverſities of operations are all to be conſidered "as coming "from the ſame God, which worketh all "in all. And the manifeſtation of the Spi-"rit is given to every man to profit withal," whether that Spirit manifeſt it ſelf in one way or another [s]. "For to one is given by "the Spirit, the word of wiſdom," [or ſpecial diſcoveries of things immediately coming from God himſelf] "to another "the word of knowledge," [or the underſtanding of things that are diſcovered and declared by others,] "which is by the ſame "Spirit. To another faith by the ſame Spi-"rit. [Where there is neither the firſt gift of original diſcoveries, nor the ſecond of knowing theſe things that are taken from the diſcoveries of others with a clear underſtanding; yet there is faith in God, and in the credible teſtimony of thoſe that have ſupe-

[s] 1 Cor. xii. 6, 7.

rior

rior wiſdom and knowledge.] " To ano-
" ther the gifts of healing by the ſame Spi-
" rit; to another the working of miracles;
" to another prophecy; to another the diſ-
" cerning of ſpirits; to another divers kinds
" of tongues. All theſe, worketh that one
" and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, dividing unto eve-
" ry man ſeverally as he will [t]."

Theſe gifts were *miraculous* and extra-ordinary in the firſt ſettling of Chriſtianity. But ſtill where any of theſe things are attained in an ordinary way, the *forming* of the temper and ſpirit for one thing more than another, and directing and aſſiſting the mind in its *application* to one thing more than another, and directing every valuable attainment to the publick good, call for the ſame acknowledgments of GOD, and require an allowing for thoſe different impreſſions he is pleaſed to make upon the ſpirits of men.

In like manner as to the *powers of the world to come*; that is, the greatneſs and certainty of the joys of the bleſſed, and the miſeries of the damned; one man may have much ſtronger, nearer, more lively and affecting views of thoſe future ſtates, than another hath. One may cry (as *Jonah* did) " out of
" the belly of hell, or as overwhelmed with
" terrors of the Lord [v]." Another may be caught, as St. *Paul* was, up to *paradiſe*, " and may ſee things that are unutterable,

[t] 1 Cor. xii. 8, to 11. [v] Jon. ii. 1, 2.

or not capable of being deſcribed to others [w]. And ſome alſo may have ſuch lively powerful imaginations of what others deſcribe, and declare they have ſeen and felt, that hearing or reading of them, they may be affected with them in a manner much like thoſe who firſt related them. But others may only conſider theſe things in a *rational* way, as what might be ordered of GOD to be the caſe of ſome men, upon ſome extraordinary occaſions; that the things ſo declared might be thoroughly credited and built upon, though not ſo ſenſibly impreſt on the ſpirits of ſuch as only reaſon from them to ſerve the common purpoſes of religion in the world.

Charity will teach us to make allowances for the *different ways* by which the great objects of faith may be impreſſed upon the mind, and the principles of it rooted and fixed there. Theſe varieties in impreſſing the great principles of religion are repreſented in that of our Saviour to *Thomas*. "Becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt be-"lieved; [and it was well for him, that he was made a believer by ſuch ſenſible manifeſtations and ſtrong evidences of things.] But then it is alſo added, "bleſſed are they "that have not ſeen, and yet have believed [x]."

Some have very lively impreſſions of things

[w] 2 Cor. xii. 4. [x] John xx. 29.

upon

upon their *imaginations*, their ſenſible *paſſions* and *affections* are more ſtrongly and vigorouſly excited. Others come to believe the very ſame doctrines and principles, upon a longer and cooler deliberation, and by the methods of reaſoning that are commonly taken to eſtabliſh other principles, as well as thoſe of religion. Charity will therefore allow for the ſhorter, quicker concluſions of ſome, and for the more laborious diſquiſitions of others. For the active zeal, and ſtrong affections of one, and for the ſlower motions, and cautious managements of another. Each of theſe proceed according to the different ways of divine things being impreſſed upon their minds, and each of them may do much to carry their own ſenſe of religion to men of the like tempers and educations. Therefore our Charity will bleſs GOD for, and wiſh ſucceſs to the vaſtly different manner of *Paul*, and *Apollos*, and *Cephas*; and never ſet the impreſſions made by one, againſt thoſe that are made by another.

But here it muſt be added, that theſe allowances of Charity are by no means to be ſtrained ſo far, as to extend to men that appear to have no *realizing apprehenſions at all* of the inviſible world, and of the life that is to come. They that "mind earthly "things," and make their temporal intereſt, or their appetites and ſenſual gratifica-

tions their main end, " are enemies to the " Croſs of Chriſt, " let their ſchemes of religion be what they will [y].

4. Charity will allow for different *opinions*, in all things that are not *expreſsly decided* and determined in the word of God.

By putting together the following texts of Scripture, you will ſee, that the truths of God are to be received as he hath *delivered* them, and in the very *words* which he hath choſen. The wiſdom of the Holy Ghoſt hath endited every chriſtian doctrine in ſuch forms of expreſſion, as will not admit of any better deciſions, or different determinations of divine things, by the words which man's wiſdom teacheth. Therefore all the words of men, and their explications of things, are only to be delivered and conſidered in love, and upon the allowances of Charity. Not in a way of authority, or ſo as to make any *human* forms of expreſſion *neceſſary* to be received.

The places of Scripture I would refer to, are only theſe few as they are here connected.

" The ſecret things belong unto the Lord " our God; but thoſe things which are re- " vealed, belong unto us and to our children " for ever, that we may do all the words " of his law [z]. That ye might learn not

[y] Phil. iii. 18, 19. [z] Deut. xxix. 29.

" to

" to think above that which is written, that " no one of you be puffed up for one [perſon or one man's doctrine] " againſt ano- " ther [a]." Theſe places ſhew very evidently that nothing ought to be inſiſted on more minutely, and with a conceit of greater accuracy, than that of Scripture. Nothing ſhould be ſearched after, or explained in the doctrines of revealed religion further, and with pretences of making higher diſcoveries, than as GOD hath declared things in the ſacred writings.

" To the law and to the teſtimony: If " they ſpeak not according to this word, " it is becauſe no light is in them [b]." This ſhews that every thing inſiſted on as a point of religion, that is not in one or other part of GOD's written teſtimony, is a proof and mark of human weakneſs and ignorance, not of light or wiſdom. And therefore it needs great Charity to prevent the ill effects of it, and to make it of any uſe and ſervice.

There is one place that doth ſo fully aſſert the wiſdom of the Spirit of GOD, to expreſs the things of GOD in his *own words* as oppoſed to the *words* of *men*, that one would think no human phraſes ſhould be uſed in the face of this text, but with the greateſt humility and Charity, and to be left at every one's liberty to receive or not receive them. " For what man knoweth the things of a

[a] 1 Cor. iv. 6. [b] Iſai. viii. 20.

" man ſave the ſpirit of a man, which is in " him? Even ſo the Spirit of GOD knoweth " no man, but the Spirit of GOD. Now " we (ſay the inſpired writers) have received " not the ſpirit which is of the world;" (by which as it may be inferred, the religions ſuited to this world are formed;) " but the " Spirit which is of GOD, that we might " know the things that are freely given to us " of GOD." And then not reſting in this general expreſſion of the things themſelves being revealed by the Holy Ghoſt, it is immediately ſubjoined, " Which things alſo we ſpeak, not " in the *words* which man's wiſdom teach- " eth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth; " comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual [c]."

Obſerve, that here is not only the *things delivered*, but the WORDS that are *choſen* to deliver them in, *both* aſcribed, and equally aſcribed, to the wiſdom of the Holy Ghoſt. He only knows the things of GOD in that manner, as to enable him to put them into the beſt and moſt deciſive expreſſions; juſt as the ſpirit of a man can beſt tell another what are the thoughts formed within it ſelf. And that nothing might be inſiſted on, *beſide* what the Holy Ghoſt ſhould teach, or *beyond* the ſtreſs he ſhould lay upon it, Chriſt himſelf expreſsly aſſured the Apoſtles, " That " when the Spirit of truth ſhould come, " he ſhould guide them into ALL truth [d].

[c] 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12, 13. [d] John xvi. 13.

There-

Therefore nothing can be a truth *neceſſary* to be received in the Redeemer's kingdom, but what is expreſsly declared to *be ſo* by the Holy Ghoſt. And that which is *moſt neceſſary*, yet is no other way to be inculcated, than by perſuaſion, and love, and exemplary piety, ſhewing forth the effects as well as reaſons of it. The Holy Ghoſt never taught any to force an aſſent to the moſt neceſſary truths, by reviling men, and treating them with anger or contempt.

To prevent this, it is made a ſtanding rule in Chriſtianity, "Him that is weak in "the faith receive ye, not to doubtful diſ-"putations [e]," or to judge his doubtful thoughts. Let things that are doubtful and diſputable, lie as GOD hath left them. Do not go about to make inquiſitions, or to form deciſive opinions in any religious matter, further than GOD himſelf hath done. In this ſenſe, it is an original fundamental law in the goſpel conſtitution, "call no man "your father upon earth; for one is your "Father, who is in heaven. Neither be ye "called maſters; for one is your Maſter, "even Chriſt [f]."

We ſhould inſiſt upon nothing with an over-confidence, or with an air and appearance of *more infallibility* than our brethren: "For we know in part, and we propheſy "in part; but when that which is perfect

[e] Rom. xiv. 1. [f] Math. xxiii. 9, 10.

"is

" is come, then that which is in part ſhall " be done away [g]. " We are therefore " required to follow Righteouſneſs, Faith, " Charity, Peace, with them that call on " the Lord out of a pure heart. But fool- " iſh and unlearned queſtions avoid, know- " ing that they do gender ſtrifes [h]. "

Theſe Scriptures being carefully ſtudied, would teach us the Charity of allowing for *different opinions* in the things of religion. But here again, Charity it ſelf cannot think well of thoſe that ſtrike at *all revelation*, and that ſet up their own ill-favoured opinions *inſtead* of the truths of Scripture; who dare to caſt contempt on the things that are expreſsly taught by the Holy Ghoſt, upon pretence of making better diſcoveries by natural light or unaſſiſted reaſon. They evidently talk of they know not what; becauſe they that have had their reaſon aſſiſted and directed by the principles of *revelation* from their infant ſtate, can with no certainty or evidence ſay what their reaſon *unaſſiſted* would have produced.

5. Charity will allow for *different forms* and *ways* of worſhip.

When the difference that was betwixt the *Jewiſh* and *Samaritan* worſhip, was mentioned to our Saviour, he takes occaſion to put all future worſhip of God upon ſuch a

[g] 1 Cor. xiii. 10. [h] 2 Tim. i. 22, 23.

foot, that outward circumſtances ſhould be comparatively of little weight, or conſideration. "The hour cometh when ye ſhall "neither in this mountain, nor yet at *Je-* "*ruſalem*, worſhip the Father." Yea, I do not only ſay the hour cometh, but I add, "it is now come, when the true worſhip- "pers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit "and in truth: For the Father ſeeketh ſuch "to worſhip him [i]."

The firſt Martyr for Chriſtianity ſhewed that GOD might be worſhipped in an acceptable manner without any of the *Moſaick* rites and ceremonies; that *Abraham* and the Patriarchs were approved of GOD, long before the ſervice of the *Jewiſh* tabernacle was appointed. "The GOD of glory appeared un- "to our father *Abraham*, when he was in "*Meſopotamia*, before he dwelt in *Char-* "*ran* [k]." And *Jacob* and *Joſeph* were owned, and delivered, and bleſſed by GOD in their way of worſhipping him. *Moſes* himſelf declared, that his ſettlement of things ſhould be ſucceeded by another: That a prophet ſhould ariſe, who ſhould mediate between GOD and the people like him, to whom he admoniſhes them, when he appears, to give heed. "A Prophet ſhall the "Lord your GOD raiſe up unto you of "your brethren like unto me; him ſhall ye "hear [l]."

[i] John iv. 21, 23. [k] Acts vii. 2. [l] Ibid. ver. 37.

The

The worſhip to which this Prophet came to lead men, St. *Paul* deſcribes to the people of *Athens*. A worſhip that had for its object, "GOD that made the world and all "things therein." And in the manner of it, ſuch as was ſuited to an omnipreſent and all-ſufficient Being, that was not to be addreſſed as if he dwelt "in temples made with "hands," or in one place more than another: Nor with any outward offerings, as if he "ſtood in need of ſuch gifts and ſer-"vices:" Nor with any uncharitable excluſions of any ſet of people from his favour and mercy: But as the common Lord and "Father of all nations of men, that dwell "on all the face of the earth." From whom all life and motion and being is derived *now*, and who has appointed a *future judgment* and *reſurrection* from the dead [m]. Where a due regard is had to theſe things, there ought not to be a ſetting up any external modes and forms of worſhip, ſo as to make GOD a reſpecter of perſons on account of *meer* outward forms; or ſo as to deſtroy the common hope of thoſe who are ſeeking for immortality and eternal life, unleſs they will all make uſe of one *common ſervice book*.

If putting divine worſhip upon ſuch a foot as this, be counted by *Jews* or any other *eſtabliſhment* in the world, a hereſy; 'tis a hereſy that chriſtian Charity teacheth us to

[m] Acts xvii. 24, *&c.*

glory

glory in, and to get above the ſpirit of thoſe that are for confining all acceptable worſhip to their own peculiar way. "This I con-" feſs (ſaith St. *Paul*) that after the way " which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I the " God of my Fathers, believing all things " which are written in the Law and the Pro-" phets; and have hope towards God which " they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall " be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the " juſt and unjuſt [n]."

The Scripture hath confined men to no *one form* either of Prayer or Praiſe; nor to any one manner and method of celebrating the Sacraments; but hath given us only ſhort and general directions as to theſe things. And therefore true Charity will ever deſire, and delight, to ſee all parts of worſhip kept in that ſtate of liberty in which the Goſpel hath left them. They that think ſome directions and forms are helpful and needful, yet if they condemn and excommunicate all that refuſe to come into ſuch encloſures, they are the ſchiſmaticks and ſeparatiſts from the Goſpel conſtitution, let them gain what numbers they will, or be ſupported by ever ſo many temporal encouragements.

The practice of chriſtian Charity on this head of worſhip, in our day, conſiſteth in chooſing our lot with thoſe that make nothing neceſſary to chriſtian communion, or

[n] Acts xxiv. 14, 15.

to the acceptable ſerving of God, but what the Scripture evidently requireth. Yet looking with Charity and good will upon all thoſe, that under *various forms* and confinements are ſeriouſly worſhipping the God of their Fathers; ſtill endeavouring to keep our own enlargement, and to enlarge the ſpirits of thoſe that are more confined, ſo as to make charitable and mutual allowances to each other. But in this caſe I muſt cloſe with a caution, as well as in the former particulars; *viz.* That Charity it ſelf cannot look upon thoſe as in a ſtate of favour and acceptance with God, who intirely *forſake the aſſembling of themſelves* together, and abſolutely reject or profane the expreſs appointments and inſtitutions of the Goſpel.

6. Charity in religion will allow for *different attainments* in matters of *practice*.

There muſt not only be all the allowances of love in the Chriſtian's *creed*, and opinions; and in his rubrick or directory for worſhip; but alſo in his whole courſe and *walk*. Therefore St. *Paul*, when he beſeeches the *Epheſians* to *walk worthy* of their chriſtian ſtate and profeſſion, explains himſelf after this manner; "with all lowlineſs and "meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing "one another in love [o]."

"One believeth that he may eat all things; "another who is weak eateth herbs. Let

[o] Eph. iv. 1, 2. "not

" not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eat-
" eth not; and let not him which eateth
" not, judge him that eateth [p]. "

" In Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion a-
" vaileth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but
" a new creature. And as many as walk ac-
" cording to this rule, peace be on them,
" and mercy, and upon the *Iſrael* of GOD [q]. "
They that walk by this rule, of becoming new creatures in heart and life, however they may differ in ſome outward practices, they are under the great law and bleſſing of *peace*.
" Let us therefore as many as be perfect,
" be thus minded: And if in any thing ye
" be otherwiſe minded, (than this rule di-
rects, or differ from us, and one another)
" GOD ſhall reveal even this unto you. Ne-
" vertheleſs whereto we have already attain-
" ed, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us
" mind the ſame thing [r]. "

Whilſt all are thus walking by the ſame rule, yet ſome have much more *exactneſs* and *ſtrength* in coming up to their rule, and keeping to it, than others have. St. *John* however does not diſdain to write unto thoſe who are as
" little children in Chriſtianity, becauſe their
" ſins (he tells them) were forgiven for the
" name's ſake of him who pardoned them;
though at the ſame time he writes unto "fa-
" thers, who had experience, and had known
" the things of GOD from the beginning.

[p] Rom. xiv. 2, 3. [q] Gal. vi. 15, 16. [r] Phil. iii. 15, 16.

" He writes unto young men alſo who were " ſtrong, and the word of GOD abode in " them, and they overcame the wicked " one [s]." Our Saviour had before made three claſſes of Chriſtians, when he is deſcribing the different ſorts of hearers of his Goſpel, that ſhould receive and believe it. " Some would bring forth thirty, ſome ſix- " ty, and ſome an hundred-fold [t]."

Hence it is that St. *Paul* preſſeth the believing *Hebrews* to ſeek after proper advances in the ſchool of Chriſt; that they might not always continue in the loweſt claſs, and be ever learning the firſt principles of Chriſtianity, or raiſing debates about them. " There- " fore leaving the principles of the doctrine " of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection; " not laying again the foundation of repen- " tance from dead works, and faith towards " GOD, of the doctrine of baptiſms, and of " laying on of hands, and of the reſurrection " of the dead, and of eternal judgment [v]." If there be not proper advances upon theſe prinples, and a going on to all that is intended to be produced by them, it is intimated by the ſubjoined declaration of the irrecoverable ſtate of apoſtates from the chriſtian faith, that they would fall from their firſt principles and engagements in Chriſtianity. It is therefore ſpoken of before with great concern; " When for the time ye ought to be

[s] 1 John ii. 12, 14. [t] Matth. xiii. 23. [v] Heb. vi. 1, 2.

" teachers,

" teachers, ye have need that one teach you " again which be the firſt principles of the " oracles of GOD; and are become ſuch as " have need of milk, not of ſtrong meat [w]." It is obſervable however, that they who ſtood in need of *milk*, are addreſſed to as Chriſtians, as well as thoſe that by reaſon of an habit of perfection, had their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil. And in the ſame epiſtle, there is expreſs proviſion made for ſuch a conduct of Chriſtians one towards another, that what was " lame ſhould not " be turned out of the way, but let it rather " be healed." That in thus doing " they " ſhould follow peace with all men, and " holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee " the Lord: Looking diligently, leſt any " root of bitterneſs ſpringing up trouble you, " and thereby many be defiled [x]." This leads to another branch of Charity in matters of religion.

7. Charity will never pretend greater *knowledge*, *zeal*, or *piety* than others, thereby to caſt a *ſtumbling block in their way.*

He that uſeth his *knowledge* to inſult another, or render him deſpicable, upon his not complying with every thing in practice that appears juſtifiable and right to more knowing perſons, is a grievous tranſgreſſor againſt the expreſs laws of Charity.

[w] Heb. vi. 12. [x] Ibid. xii. 13, 14, 15.

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[w] Heb. vi. 12. [x] Ibid. xii. 13, 14, 15.

There

There are two particular caſes mentioned by St. *Paul* upon which the rule for this branch of Charity is founded. "One man "eſteemeth *one day* above another: Another "eſteemeth every day alike. Let every man "be fully perſuaded in his own mind [y]." So alſo, he had obſerved the different apprehenſions of men about *meats*; upon which he ſhews that different *degrees of knowledge* ſhould not make the *wiſe* caſt contempt upon the *weak*; much leſs repreſent them as offenſive to GOD, and under his condemnation. Becauſe "he that regardeth "the day, regardeth it to the Lord, and "he that regardeth not the day, [ſtill acting with the ſame intention and diſpoſition to pleaſe his Lord] to the Lord he doth "not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to "the Lord, for he giveth GOD thanks. And "he that eateth not to the Lord, to the Lord "he eateth not, and giveth GOD thanks. "Let us not therefore judge one another any "more, but judge this rather, that no man "put a ſtumbling block, or an occaſion to "fall in his brother's way [z]."

In another place the Apoſtle declaring "there is not in every man that knowledge" which ſome may attain to, and boaſt themſelves of; their acting as thoſe of more knowledge did, might defile their weak conſcience; by which means they might be emboldened

[y] Rom. xiv. 5. [z] Ibid. ver. 6, 13.

to

to ſuppreſs and contradict conſcience ſo far, as to prove not only their *wounding*, but their *periſhing*. "Through thy knowledge "ſhall the weak brother periſh for whom "Chriſt died [a]." Upon which occaſion, this rule is expreſsly given; "Take heed leſt "by any means this liberty of yours, become "a ſtumbling block to them that are weak [b]."

Again: Charity will not admit of any thing being inſiſted on, that is really *an offence* to others, upon pretenſions of greater ſanctity, or *more piety* and grace than they have. As men of warmer heads and more knowledge than their neighbours in ſome particular points, are apt to ſet up *themſelves* for a *ſtandard* to thoſe of weaker minds, or that have leſs time for ſtudying ſome particular controverſies; ſo on the other hand, men of pious devotional hearts, and of ſtricter manners in life, are apt to ſet up their piety and attainments in practical religion, as a *ſtandard* to thoſe whoſe knowledge may carry them to greater liberties. And thus they alternately *inſiſt*, and upon a non-compliance alternately *condemn* one another. But Charity will not allow impoſitions, or contempt and rejecting of others for their being *leſs holy*, no more than for their being leſs knowing, if they *appear ſincere*.

The man of knowledge may juſtly eſteem his knowledge, and muſt not act contrary

[a] 1 Cor. viii. 7, 10, 11. [b] Ibid. ver. 9.

to

to it, but ſhould do what he can to communicate it, and to recommend it to thoſe that want it. And the man of ſerious piety may juſtly eſteem and adhere to the rules of worſhip, and holineſs; and by a conſtant good *example*, he ſhould endeavour to engage others in the ſame regular track of *devotion*, and courſe of life. But neither of them ſhould make themſelves ſuch *ſtandards*, as to condemn the other, for not coming up to their pitch; nor ſhould they carry it uncharitably, either on account of practices that argue more knowledge, or more inward holineſs and warm affection to the ways and things of GOD.

When the *Baptiſt* came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; the Son of man came eating and drinking [c]. Pride and perverſeneſs and an uncharitable ſpirit ſaid, The one had a *devil*; and reproached the other as a *friend of publicans and ſinners*; when both, to ſerve different purpoſes, were the choſen meſſengers of GOD. Our Saviour ſpake a *parable* on purpoſe to humble them that truſted in their own righteouſneſs and deſpiſed others [d]. Charity will not allow of ſaying to another, "ſtand off, I am more holy "than thou;" nor of requiring any thing as a proof of *holineſs*, which the word of GOD does not require.

In this caſe, as well as others, that rule

[c] Luke vii. 33, 34. [d] Ibid. xviii. 9.

is to be applied; "Who maketh thee to dif-
"fer from another? And what haſt thou,
"that thou didſt not receive? Now if thou
"didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory as
"if thou hadſt not received it [e]?" All the meaſures of grace and holineſs, as well as gifts of knowledge and wiſdom, are to be repreſented to men as coming from GOD; and therefore not to be gloried in, as if they were from our ſelves, or to be wrought according to our will and demands upon others.

If men will ſet their violent *inſiſting* upon things, in the ſame place with GOD's grace and power of beſtowing them; or if they will carry their requirements beyond what the wiſdom and ſpirit of GOD hath done in the ſacred writings; ſcandals and ſtumbling blocks will undoubtedly be ever in the church, and amongſt the beſt Chriſtians. Therefore Charity will not ſet up either knowledge, or piety, to juſtify ſuch *impoſing* offenſive ways. That rule of St. *James* will include and enforce all the others. "Who is a wiſe man and
"endued with knowledge amongſt you?
"Let him ſhew out of a good converſation
"his works with meekneſs of wiſdom [f].

8. Charity will not invade the province of the *great Judge of hearts*, though ſome miſtakes and faults in one man may appear very great and palpable to another.

[e] 1 Cor. iv. 7. [f] Jam. iii. 13.

If a man profeſſeth *ſincerity* and *honeſty* in his declared ſentiments, and in his actions; and we can produce no valid proofs of falſhood and inſincerity in his conduct; Charity will hope the beſt as to his ſtate toward GOD: though with *our* knowledge, and upon *our* convictions, it would be very ill for us to ſpeak and act as he does. Thoſe notions may have no bad effect upon one man, which would make another very looſe and wicked. Thoſe practices may be conſiſtent with ſincerity, and with the hope of mercy in one man, for which the heart of another would condemn him, and expoſe him to the judgment of that GOD who is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things.

In this particular therefore the rules of Charity are as follow. "There is one Law-"giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy; "Who art thou that judgeſt another [g]? "Therefore judge nothing before the time "until the Lord come, who both will bring "to light the hidden works of darkneſs, and "will make manifeſt the counſels of the "heart [h]. Who art thou that judgeſt ano-"ther man's ſervant? To his own maſter "he ſtandeth or falleth. Yea he ſhall be "holden up, for GOD is able to make him "ſtand [i]. Judge not, that ye be not judged; "for with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall "be judged; and with what meaſure ye mete,

[g] Jam. iv. 12. [h] 1 Cor. iv. 5. [i] Rom. xiv. 4.

"it

" it ſhall be meaſured to you again [k]. Charity " thinketh no evil, as we ſhewed before.

We are not to underſtand theſe places, as if the known and open iniquities of men, that are expreſsly condemned by the laws of GOD, were to be counted no iniquities; or to be coloured with excuſes, and ſoft names, that ſhould take away all fear and concern about them. Or as if the tenets of infidels publiſhed and uttered in contempt of ſcripture, and in direct oppoſition thereto, were harmleſs, and as conſiſtent with a ſtate of ſalvation as the miſtakes and errors of one who ſincerely profeſſeth to believe and obey the Goſpel. For in ſuch caſes, Chriſtianity condemns all favourers of the vices and errors of men. It requires us to be *ſeparate* from them, to " re- " buke them ſharply, to hate that which is " evil, and to contend earneſtly for the faith " which was once delivered to the ſaints [l]; " that is for the holy ſcriptures, with all the truths and precepts there delivered to us.

To be brief; all our ſeparations from others, and our moſt earneſt contentions, muſt be managed with a prevailing benignity and good-will to their perſons. And as long as there is but a *peradventure* of doing good to any, by our admonitions and informations, Charity will put us upon all kind and generous attempts. " In meekneſs in- " ſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if

[k] Matth. vii. 1, 2. [l] Jude ver. 13.

" God peradventure will give them repen-
" tance to the acknowledging of the truth;
" and that they may recover themſelves out
" of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken
" captive by him at his will [m]." This leads me to add

Laſtly, That Charity will *order the paſſions* of men, and form their tempers to a continual and *habitual moderation*, during this ſtate of trial and imperfection: And it will teach us to refer the final ſtate of men, to a near approaching judgment.

" Let your moderation be known unto all
" men: The Lord is at hand [n]." Let your carriage and conduct be ſuch, as patiently * and moderately to bear oppoſitions, and ſufferings of any kind, in the way of your duty. The Lord is at hand, to ſupport you; to reckon with thoſe that are of haughty or violent and envious ſpirits; and to judge all in a way that ſhall convince them, that modeſty and moderation were beſt becoming all ſuch as were looking for his appearance.

" But why doſt thou judge thy brother?
" Or why doſt thou ſet at naught thy bro-
" ther? For we ſhall all ſtand before the
" judgment ſeat of Chriſt [o]."

[m] 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. [n] Phil. iv. 5. * Τὸ ἐπιεικὲς (*the adjective neuter, put in the place of a ſubſtantive*) ἐπιείκια, *which ſignifies that kind of behaviour and temper that conſiſts in ſtrict* juſtice, ſedateneſs, *an* eaſy, patient *converſation.* " *Let your* patient *mind be known*, &c. [o] Rom. xiv. 10.

This

This conſtant, calm, referring of every thing to a judgment at hand, St. *James* would have to ſuppreſs the very *grudges* and inward *groans* of Chriſtians one againſt another. He would have it prevent their doing or ſaying any thing to *grieve* each other, or to unſettle and unhinge one another's minds in the ways of religion and piety. " Be ye patient; ſtabliſh your hearts; " for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. " Grudge not [groan not, or grieve not] " one againſt another, brethren, leſt ye be " condemned [p]. "

Thus ſtands the Scripture account of Charity, and directions for the practice of it, in *matters of religion.* Upon a review of theſe things here laid together, you ſee the reaſon of that apoſtolical aſſertion and declaration; " Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity " edifieth: And if any man think that he " knows any thing " in religion, which makes him act contrary to theſe rules, and is not ordered by that love and moderation they preſcribe, " he knows nothing yet as " he ought to know: But if any man love " God; [and ſo manage himſelf toward all the ſervants of God, as that love of God would teach him; whatever be his knowledge, leſs or more,] " the ſame is known of " God [q]. " He is accepted and approved

[p] Jam. v. 8, 9. [q] 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 3.

" on

on account of his Love and Charity, let his attainments otherways be ſmall, or great.

St. *John* therefore might well beſpeak their regards to this love, in the ſtrongeſt terms, and the moſt affectionate manner. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love "is of GOD, and every one that loveth is "born of GOD, and knoweth GOD. He "that loveth not, knoweth not GOD, for "GOD is Love. If a man ſay I love GOD, "and hateth his brother, he is a liar: For "he that loveth not his brother whom he "hath ſeen, how can he love GOD whom "he hath not ſeen [r]?"

[r] 1 John. iv. 7, 8, 20.

SECTION V.

Of Charity to the Poor *and* Afflicted, *or of relieving the* Wants *of others.*

THIS is ſo great a branch of Charity, that, in the common way of ſpeaking, it has engroſs'd the name of Charity to it ſelf.

The rules and directions of ſcripture relating hereto, may beſt be collected under ſuch a general propoſition or declaration as this: "Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the "poor [s]."

[s] Pſal. xli. 1.

By

By the word *poor* in this place, ſome underſtand the *ſick* or weak, or ſuch as are *oppreſſed*, and in any kind of neceſſity. And by the word [*Maſchil*] here tranſlated *conſidereth*, is meant, he that adverteth the mind, and looketh to the poor, ſo as to fix his thoughts upon their caſe, and to find out and attend to the proper way of helping them. So alſo it is read, he that *underſtandeth* the poor, and has a juſt ſenſe of their neceſſities, and puts himſelf in their place and ſtead. He that *contriveth* about the poor, and is well diſpoſed and bountiful to them.

Another reading is, he that carries it prudently, and with *judgment* to the poor: Not haſtily concluding their diſtreſs is a curſe upon them; or the fruit of ſome greater ſins, than others in better circumſtances have committed; but wiſely pitying the diſorders and miſeries to which our nature is ſubject, and prudently ſhewing a regard to one's own fleſh and blood: "For GOD hath made of "one blood all nations of men, for to dwell "on all the face of the earth [t]." However different the rich and the poor may ſeem, by reaſon of their different cloathing, and different ways of living, they are all of the ſame common mould.

The ſum of all theſe explications, is what

[t] Acts xvii. 26.

ſhall

ſhall be at large treated on in this ſection, namely, That Charity will have a very inquiſitive, prudent, tender *regard*, to the *wants* and *neceſſities* of others.

If health be wanting, and ſickneſs call for the ſupply of remedies, with other helps; if there be a want of meat or drink, or cloathing, or lodging, or liberty, or any neceſſaries in life or death; Charity will prudently think what is fit to be done, and what ſupplies it is able to afford in all theſe caſes.

The ſeveral ſteps and branches of this kind of Charity, the ſcripture is very copious in deſcribing; I ſhall collect the moſt material paſſages, in the order following.

1. Charity will *enquire* out, and inform it ſelf concerning the neceſſities of others.

" The righteous conſidereth the cauſe of " the poor, but the wicked regardeth not to " know it [v]. " It is here made a mark of wickedneſs, to be regardleſs of the wants of others. It is an ill ſpirit that hath no will to know, and inform it ſelf of, the cauſe of the poor: Whilſt righteouſneſs, on the other hand, *conſidereth*, and ſeeks after the knowledge of a diſtreſſed caſe. When the Pſalmiſt ſays, " Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the " poor [w]; " it may be very proper to add to what is ſaid before, that the word there tranſlated [*conſidereth*] is uſed for that *ſecret*

[v] Prov. xxix. 7. [w] Pſal. xli. 1.

attention

attention that was required to the words of the law, in order to a right *underſtanding* of them [u]. Thus Charity will get underſtanding about the wants of others, and about the beſt ways of ſupplying them, or ſupporting under them. "I was a father to "the poor; and the cauſe which I *knew not*, "I ſearched out [x]." The firſt Chriſtians did not only contribute to the poor that lived *amongſt them*, but they informed themſelves of the ſtate of thoſe that were *diſtant* from them, and ſent relief by their own meſſengers. "The diſciples every man according to his "ability, determined to ſend relief unto the "brethren which dwelt in *Judea* [y]."

There are many caſes of diſtreſs, found out by thoſe who love to inform themſelves of ſuch things, which are not known or imagined by the generality of their acquaintance. The difficulty of ſome caſes being made known, render them really more moving, and neceſſitous, than the caſes of others who can make their wants known to every body, and are ready to make intereſt for a ſhare in every *boon* they hear of. St. *Paul* prays for mercy to the houſe of *Oneſiphorus* on this account, (amongſt others) "that when he was "in *Rome* he ſought out for a confined, im-"priſoned man, and found him, and oft "refreſhed him [z].

[u] Nehem. viii. 13. [x] Job xxix. 16. [y] Acts xi. 26.
[z] 2 Tim. i. 17.

2. Charity will *pity* the *weak* and *diſtreſſed*, and carry it *tenderly* toward them, after it finds them out.

" If there be among you a poor man of one " of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, " in thy land which the Lord thy GOD giv- " eth thee, thou ſhalt not harden thy heart, " nor ſhut thy hand from thy poor bro- " ther [a]." Hence it is that we find Charity deſcribed ſometimes by " *having pity on* " *the poor* [b]." Sometimes by " ſhewing " *mercy* to them: The righteous ſheweth " mercy and lendeth [c]." And many places there are of the like import.

" Thus ſpeaketh the Lord of Hoſts, ſay- " ing, ſhew mercy and compaſſion every " man to his brother [d]." And our Saviour in the *parable* ſays, " ſhouldſt not thou have " had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, e- " ven as I had pity on thee [e]?" The Scripture abounds with advices and directions to keep a *tender heart*, and to put on *bowels* of *mercy*, and to *weep* with *them that weep*, and to ſympathize with the *afflicted*, and the like.

3. Charity will do every thing it can, with propriety, to *relieve* the poor and neceſſitous, as well as pity them.

" If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and

[a] Deut. xv. 7. [b] Prov. xix. 17. [c] Pſal. xxxvii. 21.
[d] Zech. vii. 9. [e] Matth. xviii. 33.

" deſtitute

" deſtitute of daily food, and one of you " ſay unto them, depart in peace, be ye warm- " ed, and filled; notwithſtanding ye give " them not thoſe things which are needful " to the body; what doth it profit[f]? "

The ſeveral *kinds* of *relief* which ſhould be afforded to the poor and diſtreſſed, are ſummed up by our Saviour, in his repreſenting the account that ſhall be taken of them in the laſt judgment. " I was an hungred, and " ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye " gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye " took me in: naked, and ye cloathed me: " I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in " priſon, and ye came unto me[g]. "

For each of theſe, we have particular directions in Scripture. It is required that we communicate *neceſſary food* to thoſe that want it. " The bleſſing of him that was ready " *to periſh* came upon me[h]. " Thou ſhalt " not gather the gleanings of thy harveſt, " and thou ſhalt not glean thy vineyard: " Thou ſhalt leave them for the poor and " ſtranger[i]. " Is not this the faſt that I " have choſen?—To deal thy bread to the " hungry, and that thou bring the poor that " is caſt out, to thy houſe? When thou ſeeſt " the naked, that thou cover him, and that " thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own " fleſh[k]. " This very conſideration of rich

[f] Jam. ii. 15, 16. [g] Matth. xxv. 35, 36. [h] Job xxix. 13.
[i] Levit. xix. 9, 10. [k] Iſai. lviii. 6, 7.

and poor being in the ſame mould and original, made *Job* careful to clear himſelf from the ſuſpicion of "withholding the "poor from their deſire; and of eating his "morſel alone, and the fatherleſs not eating thereof [l]." He alſo adds, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* does in the place juſt quoted, "that he had not ſeen any periſh for want "of cloathing, nor poor without covering; "but their loins were preſently refreſhed, "and they bleſſed him [the good man] that "warmed them with the fleece of his "ſheep [m]."

As to lodging, or providing ſome proper place for the deſtitute and ſtrangers, *Job* ſays, "that the ſtranger did not lodge in the "ſtreets, but he opened his doors to the "traveller [n]." When there were no ſuch accommodations as now there are, at inns and publick houſes, it was a noble inſtance of Charity to *lodge* and *entertain* thoſe that were caſt into ſtrange places. And it is ſtill great Charity to aſſiſt ſuch, in procuring lodgings for themſelves, who muſt otherwiſe be caſt into the ſtreets.

In the firſt ſettling of Chriſtianity there was particular encouragement given to thoſe that were willing to entertain ſtrangers. "Be "not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers, for "thereby ſome have entertained Angels un-

[l] Job xxxi. 16, 17. [m] Ibid. ver. 19, 20.
[n] Ibid. ver. 32.

"awares."

" awares [o]." Had not this been inculcated, and well received in the world at that time, Chriſtianity could never have ſpread. For the Apoſtles, Evangeliſts, and firſt propagators of the chriſtian religion, were obliged to travel as ſtrangers from one city to another, and from one kingdom and quarter of the world to another. And ſtill it is the caſe of many an afflicted, perſecuted Chriſtian, to be driven from his own houſe, and friends; and to live upon the kindneſs and charity of thoſe, amongſt whom he becomes a ſojourner.

Viſiting, and helping the *ſick* and *weak*, is a great branch of Charity. The voice of nature and neceſſity is ſo ſtrong in this caſe, that when the ſhepherds of *Iſrael* are reproached for their unfaithfulneſs in their office, their iniquity is expoſed by the hardneſs and barbarity of thoſe that leave the *diſeaſed*, and *wandering*, and *broken*, to periſh and be loſt, without any concern about them. " The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened, neither have ye healed that which " was ſick, neither have ye bound up that " which was broken, neither have ye brought " again that which was driven away [p]." In another place, " I will raiſe up a ſhepherd " in the land which ſhall not viſit thoſe " that be cut off, or hidden; neither ſhall " ſeek the young one, nor heal that that is " broken, nor feed or bear that which ſtand-

[o] Heb. xiii. 2. [p] Ezek. xxxiv. 4.

" eth

" eth ſtill [q]." Our Saviour on the contrary has done great honour to the name of a *Samaritan*, for his helping one that was " half dead: Going to him; binding up his " wounds; pouring in oil and wine; bringing him to an inn, and ordering all neceſſaries to be provided for him there, in " order to a perfect recovery at his own expence [r]." A vaſt number of Chriſt's *miracles* were wrought for the healing of the *ſick*. And, to add no more, that of the *Pſalmiſt* which in our common tranſlation is rendered *poor*, [when it is ſaid, bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor,] is more properly thought by others to ſignify the *ſick* and *weak*. And indeed it well ſuits with one part of the bleſſing afterward promiſed, that ſuch a one " ſhall be ſtrengthened, when he comes to " lie upon a bed of languiſhing himſelf [s]."

The laſt inſtance of *actual relief* recommended in the Goſpel (as above) is coming to, and comforting the *impriſoned* or *confined*, and conſequently doing what we can to procure their *liberty*. Where any are ſeiſed and arreſted for debt; if they humble themſelves, and promiſe their utmoſt endeavours to make payment upon allowing them time; their being detained in a priſon till the debt is diſcharged, ſtands expreſsly condemned for want of Charity and compaſſion [t]. And

[q] Zechar. xi. 16.
[r] Luke x. 30, 34, 35.
[s] Pſal. xli. 1, 2, 3.
[t] Matth. xviii. 29, 30.

where

where it would be no hurt to a creditor, Charity is repreſented going ſo far, as rather wholly to forgive a debt, than conſume a man's days in priſon for it. "Deliver the "ſpoiled out of the hand of the oppreſſor [v]." Where men have *pledged* their goods, or eſtates, and fall into miſery by that means for want of ability to redeem them, there relief is to be given by *reſtoring the pledge* upon the eaſieſt terms that may be. This is mentioned three times in one chapter, as a neceſſary fruit and effect of righteouſneſs. "He "hath reſtored to the debtor his pledge [w]."

Where men are impriſoned for the ſake of their integrity and a *good conſcience*, it is a neceſſary part of Charity in *all the views* of it, there to viſit them, and do all we can for their deliverance. "I was in priſon, (ſays Chriſt) "and ye came unto me;" which he after explains by aſſuring them that "inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of "the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have "done it unto me [x]. Remember them that "are in bonds, as bound with them; and "them which ſuffer adverſity, as being your-"ſelves alſo in the body [y]."

In common life, one perſon cannot be ſuppoſed to abound in *all* theſe acts of Charity; but as we are providentially called to the exerciſe of *any* of them, and according

[v] Jer. xxii. 3. [w] Ezek. xviii. 7, 12, 16.
[x] Matth. xxv. 40. [y] Heb. xiii. 3.

to the ability God gives, we ſhould be willing and well diſpoſed to help them that need, in one or more of theſe inſtances. And they that have large eſtates, or a great deal of leiſure, may do very kind and great things in *every* particular we have mentioned.

To this let me add, that *ſingle acts* of kindneſs ſhould not content thoſe who have wealth enough to help people out of their neceſſities, and at the ſame time to preſerve them from future extremities. The righteous doth not only ſhew mercy and give, "but he is ever merciful and lendeth [z]." He contrives for continuing Charities, and ſuch as may render his mercy perpetual. He is ever merciful, lending to the poor and needy, or placing in the hands of others ſums of money for their uſe and ſervice. Under this head all thoſe Charities come, that make proviſion for the employment of the poor, and putting them into ways to provide for themſelves; and the building of houſes for lodging, feeding, and cloathing the aged, maimed, and diſtreſſed. Theſe we commonly call Work-houſes, and Almshouſes. And to the ſame branch of Charity belong Hoſpitals, and other buildings for the *ſick* and *diſtracted*; where continual proviſion is made for their healing and ſupport. It is a pity that any man ſhould confine his religion to theſe things, and expect to make

[z] Pſal. xxxvii. 26.

heaven

heaven to himſelf purely by ſuch donations: And it is a thouſand pities that any of theſe Charities ſhould be abuſed by thoſe that are entruſted with the management of them. But this however is an evident truth, that to relieve the hungry, and thirſty, and naked; and to build conveniencies for lodging the poor, and ſick, and maimed; and to redeem priſoners and captives; and to contrive all, ſo as to ſerve the purpoſes of religion, and to promote true piety, and the ſalvation of ſouls, is by ſo much the greater and more valuable Charity, as it is *continued*, and ſo may preſerve its objects from falling back into miſeries, and extremities.

4. Charity will put men upon *contriving* their affairs and *expences*, ſo as to have *ſomething ready* for all neceſſary occaſions.

When it is ſaid "the good man ſheweth favour and lendeth," in order to this it is immediately added, "He will guide his af-"fairs with diſcretion;" or with judgment [a]. The liberal are deſcribed by the Prophet as "*deviſing liberal things* [b]." They forecaſt and contrive for it. Exactly agreeable to this, the *Apoſtle* writes to the *Corinthians*; "Let every one of you, lay by him "in ſtore, as GOD hath proſpered him [c]." Not only be ready to give to the poor ſaints, but *lay up* a ſecret ſtore for good uſes. To

[a] Pſal. cxii. 5. [b] Iſai. xxxii. 8. [c] 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

provide ſuch a ſtock, our Saviour bids one of his followers, "ſell that thou haſt and "give to the poor [d]." And St. *Paul* would have thoſe that live upon their labour, "to "work with their hands the thing that is "good, that they may have ſomething to "diſtribute to him that needeth [e]." This is elſewhere required to flow from a fixed principle, and ſettled purpoſe of the heart. "Every man according as he purpoſeth in "his heart, ſo let him give [f]." It is ordered by a wiſe Providence that the poor ſhall never ceaſe; and for this very reaſon God would have ſtated and liberal ſupplies provided for them. "For the poor ſhall "never ceaſe out of the land; therefore I "command thee, ſaying, thou ſhalt open "thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy "poor and to thy needy in thy land [g]." The *quota pars* of a man's gains or eſtate, which ſhould be devoted to charitable uſes, (conſidering it as diſtinct from the contributions to offices of piety, and to ſupport the worſhip of God, and the miniſters of religion) muſt be left to every perſon's own *prudence* and faith, and to a careful conſulting the examples of good men that have well weighed this ſubject, and experimentally proved the advantages of attending to it.

[d] Matth. xix. 21. [e] Eph. iv. 28.
[f] 2 Cor. ix. 7. [g] Deut. xv. 11.

5. Cha-

5. Charity will always ſhew itſelf *well pleaſed* with acts of goodneſs, and with opportunities of contributing *ſeaſonably* and *ſuitably* to them that need.

" Thou ſhalt ſurely give to thy poor brother, and thine heart ſhall not be *grieved* " when thou giveſt unto him; becauſe that " for this thing the Lord ſhall bleſs thee in " all thy works, and all in that thou putteſt " thine hand unto [h]. He that ſheweth " mercy, muſt do it with *chearfulneſs*. And " he muſt not only diſtribute in caſes of abſolute neceſſity, but muſt be given to hoſpitality [i]. Add to this, that if there be " firſt a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not [k]. Thoſe that " are rich, ſtand charged not only to do " good, and be rich in good works, but to " be *ready* and *willing* to communicate to " others [l]. We muſt not give grudgingly, " for GOD loveth a chearful giver: And he " is able to make all grace abound towards " you, that ye always having all-ſufficiency " in all things may abound to every good " work [m]. Uſe hoſpitality one to another " without grudging [n].

Further; proper ſeaſons and opportunities of relieving the poor, make every gift

[h] Deut. xv. 10. [i] Rom. xii. 8, 13. [k] 2 Cor. viii. 12.
[l] 1 Tim. vi. 18. [m] 2 Cor. ix. 7, 8. [n] 1 Pet. iv. 9.

a double act of kindneſs and Charity. " As " we have opportunity let us do good [o]." Seaſonable and ſuitable Charities, ſhew more of wiſdom and contrivance in the giver, excite greater thankfulneſs in the receiver, and have moſt of God in the very actions themſelves. Obſerve alſo, that an opportunity for Charity which is more *extenſively* beneficial, or which may more ſignally promote the good of the *moſt pious* Chriſtians, is to be preferred to a more private reſtrained Charity. We muſt therefore ſtudy " to do " good to all men, eſpecially unto them who " are of the houſhold of faith [o]. He who " hath a bountiful eye ſhall be bleſſed [p]."

6. True Charity will do all *as to* God, hoping for *nothing again* from *thoſe* who are relieved by it.

" When thou doſt thine alms do not " ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypo- " crites do, in the ſynagogues and in the " ſtreets, that they may have glory of men. " Verily I ſay unto you, they have their re- " ward. But when thou doſt alms let not " thy left hand know what thy right hand " doth: That thine alms may be in ſecret; " and thy Father who ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall " reward thee openly [q]." No charitable contributions ſhould be made publick for oſtentation ſake, and to gain applauſe of men.

[o] Gal. vi. 10. [p] Prov. xxii. 9. [q] Matth. vi. 2, 3, 4.

For

For if this be the reward aimed at it, will be accounted of as a reward *ſufficient*, for them who look no higher in their good actions than the preſent world. But they that have ſuch a love to acts of mercy and goodneſs, that they can take pleaſure in helping and relieving others without any expectation of praiſe or reward from men; yea can do all with ſo ſtrong a faith in GOD, and commit themſelves wholly to him, that one hand ſhall take no knowledge, nor ſet down to any account for this life, what the other hand does; there our Father who ſees in ſecret, will himſelf openly reward ſuch humble merciful ſouls.

We are not from hence to conclude, that our Saviour forbids publick Charities. No, he elſwhere greatly encourages them; particularly when he ſat to take notice of the gifts that were caſt into the *treaſury*. Upon which occaſion he commends the poor widow, that in ſo publick a way "caſt in all "the living that ſhe had [r]."

A publick act of Charity may be done with as pure a regard to GOD only, and to that reward which comes from him, as a ſecret contribution. And there may be as little oſtentation in what is done publickly, as in things done privately. Secret gifts and preſents may ſometimes be more talked of afterward, and procure more fame under

[r] Luke xxi. begin.

a little

a little good management than publick Charities do. Conſider further, that publick examples of Charity are neceſſary in ſome caſes, to excite others, and to promote the greater glory of God, as well as the good of men. But let the acts of Charity be open, or ſecret, yet the intention muſt be one and the ſame, if we would pleaſe God. To prove our ſelves true Chriſtians, and ſound believers of another life after this, all muſt be entirely referred to God, and the promiſes that he hath given us.

Our Saviour hath put this into very plain terms, under the metaphor of inviting gueſts to a feaſt. "When thou makeſt a feaſt, "call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the "blind; and thou ſhalt be bleſſed. For "they cannot recompenſe thee; for thou "ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection "of the juſt [s]." And St. *John* has put all Charity in communicating this world's good to them that need, upon a principle of love to God. "Whoſo hath this world's good "and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhut-"teth up his bowels of compaſſion from "him, how dwelleth the love of God in "him [t]?" With this view of doing all as to God, and looking for our reward *only* from him, we are told, "He that hath pi-"ty on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and "that which he hath given, will he pay "him again [v]." 7. Charity

[s] Luke xiv. 13, 14. [t] 1 John iii. 17. [v] Pro. xix. 17.

7. Charity will *continue* in ſuch a courſe as this, without *diſtruſt* or *wearineſs.*

This branch of righteouſneſs is ſaid to remain *for ever.* Nothing will deſtroy it, where it is once prudently and chearfully practiſed, nor will the happy fruits and effects of it be ever loſt. "He hath diſperſed abroad, he hath given to the poor, "his righteouſneſs remaineth for ever [w]." For ſuch there is ſucceſsful interceſſion made. "Now he that miniſtreth ſeed to the ſower, "both miniſter bread for your food, and "multiply your ſeed ſown, and encreaſe "the fruits of your righteouſneſs [x]." As a huſbandman, in a good harveſt, has not only corn enough to ſupply his family with bread, but enough to ſow his ground with afreſh, and to carry alſo to market to ſupply the wants of others; ſo will it be with thoſe that ſow in Charity. And as their ſtock encreaſes, the fruits of their righteouſneſs will encreaſe too.

Therefore St. *Paul*, in his epiſtle to the *Galatians*, applies this admonition ſpecially to acts of liberality, that we ſhould *never be weary* of them. "For he that ſoweth "to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption: But he that ſoweth to the ſpirit, "ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting. And "let us not be weary in well-doing; for in

[w] 2 Cor. ix. 9. [x] Ibid. ver. 10.

"due

" due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not [y].
" Ye have miniſtred to the ſaints, and do
" miniſter: And we deſire that every one of
" you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full
" aſſurance of hope unto the end [z]."

8. To promote true Charity there ought to be a juſt ſenſe of the *miſeries* that attend the *uncharitable*, and the *bleſſings* promiſed to the *kind* and *merciful.*

Many of thoſe texts of Scripture which ſpeak both ways, have been quoted already. But there are ſeveral *others* of great weight, and importance, that I ſhall here ſet down, both in general, and ſpecial declarations. Moſt of them belong to this laſt branch of Charity, and therefore I chooſe to place them here. But they ought to be applied to the diſpoſition of mercy and goodneſs, as it takes in all the foregoing branches of Charity in the former ſections. The greateſt bleſſings attend this heavenly diſpoſition, and the greateſt curſes and miſeries ariſe from its contrary.

The puniſhments of the *uncharitable* are very great, both in this, and a future world.

A cruel temper is a torment and trouble to it ſelf. " He that is cruel, troubleth his
" own fleſh [a]."

[y] Gal. vi. 8, 9. [z] Heb. vi. 10, 11. [a] Prov. xi. 17.

He

He that thinks to grow rich by uncharitableneſs, ſhall be diſappointed, and become poor. "There is that with-holdeth "more than is meet, and it tendeth to po- "verty [b]."

He that had no compaſſion for another, ſhall find none when he cries and ſeeks it for himſelf. "Whoſo ſtoppeth his ears at the "cries of the poor, he alſo ſhall cry himſelf, "and ſhall not be heard [c]. Wo to them that "are at eaſe in *Zion*, that drink wine in "bowls, that anoint themſelves with chief "ointments; but they are not grieved for "the affliction of *Joſeph* [d]." Their hearts do not enter into the conſideration of others diſtreſſes.

Unmerciful people lie under a common odium. "He that giveth to the poor, ſhall "not lack; but he that hideth his eyes, "ſhall have many a curſe [e]." Not meerly the profane, and wicked poor, will vent their curſes; (for thoſe do more hurt to ſuch wretches *themſelves* than to *others*, and ſhew them to be miſcreants;) but many a *real curſe* the uncharitable ſhall meet with, and find and feel to be a curſe to them.

And then as to a future ſtate, 'tis moſt awfully and peremptorily determined, "That "he ſhall have judgment without mercy, "who hath ſhewed no mercy: And at the

[b] Prov. xi. 25. [c] Ibid. xxi. 13. [d] Amos vi. 1—6.
[e] Prov. xxviii. 27.

" ſame time in the caſe of others, he ſhall " ſee mercy rejoicing, or glorying againſt " judgment [f]." Thoſe whom Chriſt will judge for their unmerciful conduct at the laſt, will fall under that dreadful ſentence, " Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire pre- " pared for the devil and his angels: For I " was an hungred, and ye gave me no " meat," *&c.* And while with hard and ſtupid hearts they turn and ask their Lord, " When ſaw we thee an hungred, or athirſt, " or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in " priſon and did not miniſter unto thee?" They are thus convicted and condemned, " Inaſmuch as ye did it not to one of the " leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me: And " theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſh- " ment [g]." A dreadful cloſe of an uncha- ritable life!

On the other hand, Charity has the pro- miſe of the greateſt and beſt of *bleſſings*, both for time, and eternity.

In the general, " bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy [h]. God is not " unrighteous to forget your work and la- " bour of love, which ye have ſhewed towards " his name, in that ye have miniſtred to " the ſaints, and do miniſter [i]. He that " ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly: And

[f] Jam. ii. 13. [g] Matth. xxv. 41—45. [h] Ibid. v. 7.
[i] Heb. vi. 10.

" he

" he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap " bountifully [k]."

As to particular bleſſings; acts of Mercy and Charity, have ſometimes returns of the like things that are communicated. " The " liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he " who watereth, ſhall be watered alſo him- " ſelf [l]." If the returns be not ſpeedy yet they are ſure. " Caſt thy bread upon the " waters, for thou ſhalt find it after many " days [m]."

If there be not returns in *kind*, there will be an *equivalent*, or that which is better. *Cornelius* a devout man who gave much alms unto the people, had an *Angel* from Heaven ſent to him, to tell him " his prayer " was heard, and his alms were had in re- " membrance in the ſight of God [n]." Remiſſion of ſins, and the bleſſings of the Goſpel were brought to his houſe. Oh! how many ſpiritual bleſſings might a kind, and merciful, and liberal ſpirit enjoy? St. *Paul* aſſures the *Philippians*, " that in return " to their liberality, God ſhould ſupply all " their need, according to his riches in glo- " ry by Chriſt Jeſus [o]."

If the merciful and charitable man fall into afflictions and troubles, he is aſſured that " the Lord will deliver him in the " day of evil; and will preſerve him, and

[k] 2 Cor. ix. 6. [l] Prov. xi. 25. [m] Eccleſ. xi. 1.
[n] Acts x. 31, &c. [o] Phil. iv. 19.

" keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed up-
" on the earth; and thou wilt not deliver
" him into the will of his enemy [p]."

Surprizing turns of mercy are allotted to ſuch. " If thou draw out thy ſoul unto the
" hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted ſoul; then
" ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity " (at a time when there is no proſpect of it) " and thy
" darkneſs be as the noon day. And GOD
" ſhall guide thee continually [q]."

Goodneſs and Charity keep the mind always in a comfortable happy frame. " He
" that hath mercy on the poor, happy is
" he [r]. He ſhall not be afraid of evil-tid-
" ings: His heart is fixed, truſting in the
" Lord [s]. Remember the words of our
" Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, it is more bleſſed
" to give than to receive [t]."

The name, and memory, of ſuch is delightful. " The righteous ſhall be had in
" everlaſting remembrance [v]." And their poſterity, and families, ſhall be bleſſed after them. " He that is merciful and lends his
" ſeed is bleſſed [w]."

Finally; If we look to a future judgment and an eternal ſtate, the great Judge will ſay to thoſe on his right hand, (for there the merciful and charitable ſhall be placed)
" Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the

[p] Pſal. xli. 1, 2, [q] Iſai. lviii. 10, 11. [r] Prov. xiv. 21.
[s] Pſal. cxii. 7. [t] Acts xx. 35. [v] Pſal. cxii. 6.
[w] Ibid. xxxvii. 26.

" kingdom

" kingdom prepared for you from the foun-
" dation of the world: For I was an hungred
" and ye gave me meat [x]: " And ſo he goes on recounting and publiſhing the inſtances of Charity before deſcribed. In another place our Saviour ſays, " Make to your ſelves
" friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſ-
" neſs, that when ye fail, thoſe friends may
" receive you into everlaſting habitations [y]." Thoſe that are rich in good works are ſaid
" to lay up in ſtore for themſelves a good
" foundation for the time to come, that
" they may lay hold on eternal life [z]." In ſuch a caſe, our Saviour expreſsly ſays, " thou
" ſhalt have treaſure in heaven [a]. "

Thus I have gone through the Scripture account of Charity, as it hath reſpect to the *wants* of others, and doing all we can to relieve them, with the rules and encouragements laid down for the practice of it. If you deſpiſe and neglect theſe advices, *that* book out of which they are taken, and by which you are to be judged, will produce them all againſt you, at the great Day of Accounts.

We have one rule that binds upon us, all that has been ſaid. " With-hold not *good*
" from him, to whom it is *due*, when it is
" in the power of thine hand to do it [b]. "

[x] Matth. xxv. 34, 35. [y] Luke xvi. 9.
[z] 1 Tim. vi. 19. [a] Luke xviii. 22. [b] Prov. iii. 27.

Not

Not only what is *juſt*, but what is *good*, ſhould be looked upon as a *debt* to our fellow-creatures and fellow-Chriſtians. Without this we cannot fulfil all righteouſneſs.

SECTION VI.

A Diſcourſe on Charity, as it extends to Enemies, *and thoſe that* hate us.

THAT we may riſe to the perfection of love, and to the higheſt pitch of goodneſs which our religion propoſeth, we muſt ſet before us that rule of our Saviour, "I ſay "unto you which hear, love your enemies, "do good to them which hate you.[c]" I ſhall therefore add an entire ſermon on this ſubject, to the other accounts of Charity.

There is ſo much enmity and ill-will prevailing in the world; and the ſpirit of the world is ſo much got into the church of Chriſt, that we have great need to learn this leſſon. Many occaſions we have for the practice of it; one or other hatred appearing and working againſt us, in one form or another, almoſt daily. The more true

[c] Luke vi. 27.

piety

piety decays, the more will brotherly love languiſh and die away; becauſe the chief motives to love, and the principal helps of of it are taken away.

The chief motives and helps to benevolence are, the love of GOD and Chriſt, and the high value which the Goſpel teaches Chriſtians to put upon each other's *ſouls*; and their uniting in good *actions*, and in the ſame glorious *hopes*. Theſe things being loſt in a dying ſtate of piety, the principles and motives of hatred and enmity muſt be expected to work more and more.

But whilſt degenerate apoſtatizing ſouls grow into a contempt of their own nature, as well as of all natures ſuperior to them, angelical and divine; and whilſt they indulge themſelves in their hateful and hating temper toward the righteous; good men, on the other hand, will be improving in all the diſpoſitions of eſteem and goodneſs, ſhewing their gentleneſs and benevolence *even* to thoſe that hate and deſpiſe them. The more we are renewed in the ſpirit of our minds, the more ſhall we get above all hatreds, and ſhall be filled with an *invincible* Charity. As evil is the counter-worker, and blaſt of goodneſs; ſo are contention, and enmity, the poiſon of love. But if evil, and enmity it ſelf, are too weak to overcome a ſpirit of love; then, is the Chriſtian perfect, as his Father in heaven is perfect.

In diſcourſing on this ſubject of love to enemies, it is very fit to enquire,

I. Who is that enemy the ſcripture requires us to love?

II. What expreſſions of love does the word of God enjoin, and oblige us to, in this caſe?

III. Wherein may the reaſonableneſs of this command be made to appear?

I. Who is *that* enemy the Scripture would have us to love?

This cannot be meant of a *publick* enemy to our country, and to the church and people of God. For the vile perſon is contemned (not loved, but abhorred and deſpiſed) by him who is a true member and citizen of *Zion*, or of the kingdom of Chriſt. Hence it is that prayers for the deſtruction of ſuch enemies, and for the juſt judgment of God to fall upon them, are frequently recorded in Scripture. Chriſtianity it ſelf requires that we have no communion, or fellowſhip, with the workers of iniquity; of whom it is ſaid, that God himſelf hates them; and, as far as any are wicked, he would have them the objects of our hatred too.

But yet if our benevolence and good-will follow the examples of God, and Chriſt, we ſhall learn to have compaſſion on the *perſons* of men, while we ſhew a deteſtation

tion of their *Vices.* So that we ſhould never treat a publick enemy, with private hatred and abhorrence. Our oppoſition to him, and attempts againſt him, muſt be all in a generous and publick way, not in any vile perſonal cruelties, calumnies, or treacheries.

The enemy that the Scripture would have us to love, is one that ſhews a *perſonal diſguſt*, and diſlike to us. Yea one that may go ſo far, as to expreſs a *perſonal hatred* of us. In our text, one clauſe mentions *enemies*; the next, them that *hate* you. The enemy here deſcribed is, one that through envy, and ill-will, treats us with reviling language, and with curſes: One that does very ill things, and carries it with cruelty, where he has it in his power to uſe us hardly. And all this may be repeated, and continued in, without making us any amends for the injuries done us, or repenting of his diſingenuous unrighteous treatment of us. I do not in this place recite the particular texts of Scripture where the enemy that a good man is required to love ſtands thus deſcribed, becauſe they will come in more fully, and ſo as to direct our practice under the next general head.

II. What expreſſions of love does the word of God enjoin, toward thoſe that perſonally hate us, and are enemies to us?

In the general, chriſtian love teacheth us to think, and ſpeak, and act, juſt the contrary to what hatred and enmity inſpire. Where men are governed by ſuch a prevailing *evil* nature, we are to ſhew a prevailing *good* nature.

Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour and hate "thine enemy. But I ſay unto you, love "your enemies; bleſs them that curſe you; "do good to them that hate you, and pray "for them which deſpitefully uſe you [d]." Beſide the general precept here given, of loving enemies, the ſeveral *proofs* and *marks* of their enmity are laid down; and the expreſſions of love, are to be juſt the reverſe. That is, good words, for bad; bleſſing, for curſing; and good actions, for actions of hatred; and prayers for the *better ſtate* of thoſe, that look upon us only with ſpite, or with perſecuting rage and contempt.

Theſe particulars are diſtinctly enforced in other places of Scripture.

Firſt, We are to have *good words* always upon our tongues, however others may utter words that are vile and evil. St. *Peter* would have every Chriſtian inure himſelf to oppoſe bad temper, and bad language, with kindneſs, and bleſſings. "Not render-"ing evil for evil, or railing for railing, but "contrarywiſe bleſſing; knowing that ye are

[d] Matth. v. 43, 44.

"there-

" thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a " bleſſing [e]. " It is the very *calling* of a Chriſtian, to bear teſtimony againſt the railing and evil ſpirit of the world, by his uttering nothing but bleſſings. In this caſe we are not to content ourſelves with bleſſing *ſome*, and curſing *others*; but to ſhew a continual kindneſs, in our language and converſation, toward all men. When St. *James* ſpeaks of men that both bleſſed and curſed, he tells them that this was by no means allowable in the chriſtian ſtate. " Out of the ſame " mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing; " my brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to " be [f]. "

Again: The Scripture expreſsly requires to ſet *good actions* toward others, againſt their actions that are evil and injurious to us. " Do good to them which hate you. If " thou meet thine enemy's ox, or aſs, go- " ing aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring him " back again to him [g]. " The reaſon of the thing is the ſame, *in any good turn* that you are capable of doing to an evil, and hating man. " If thine enemy be hungry, give " him bread to eat; and if he be thirſty, " give him water to drink [h]." This is quoted by St. *Paul* in his epiſtle to the *Romans*; and recommended to Chriſtians, inſtead of acts of vengeance, and returns of evil. " Re-

[e] 1 Pet. iii. 9. [f] Jam. iii. 10. [g] Exod. xxiii. 4.
[h] Prov. xxv. 21.

" compenſe to no man evil for evil. Avenge " not yourſelves, but rather give place unto " wrath: For it is written, vengeance is " mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord of hoſts. " Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed " him; if he thirſt, give him drink [i]." Since God is the avenger of all wrongs and enmities, therefore don't fall in with a temper, and conduct, like that of your enemy's; but feed him, and help him, and leave it to God to judge between your conduct and that of your enemy.

Thirdly, In this benignity or kindneſs of words and actions, the Scripture requires we ſhould be *unwearied*. " Be not overcome " of evil, but overcome evil with good [k]." Our love and goodneſs ſhould be ſuch, as that evil may never get the power over us. It ſhould be ſomething invincible. " See " that none render evil for evil unto any " man; but ever follow that which is good, " both amongſt yourſelves and unto all " men [l]." This we are required to carry ſo far, as not to retain a *ſecret grudge*, that ſhould make us *wiſh* for any evil to befal any man. " Thou ſhalt not avenge, nor bear " any grudge againſt the children of thy " people; but thou ſhalt love thy neighbour " as thy ſelf [m]." This muſt now be underſtood, according to the goſpel deſcription of

[i] Rom. xii. 17, 19, 20. [k] Ibid. ver. 21.
[l] 1 Theſſ. v. 15. [m] Levit. xix. 18.

a *neigh-*

a *neighbour*. *Job* diſclaims the rejoicing at the "deſtruction of the man that hated "him." And he did not lift up himſelf, in any triumph or boaſting, when evil found out ſuch an enemy: "neither (ſaith he) have "I ſuffered my mouth to ſin by wiſhing "a curſe to his ſoul [n]."

Hence it is that *Solomon* makes it a maxim in life: "Rejoice not when thine ene-"my falleth, and let not thine heart be "glad when he ſtumbleth [o]."

But notwithſtanding this inward goodneſs, and freedom from all rancour and grudging, and avoiding ill wiſhes toward him that hates us: And notwithſtanding the good words, and good actions, that we are to return to all evil when proper occaſions offer: yet we are by no means to take ſuch into *our boſoms*, or to contract any *intimacy* with them. For

Fourthly, The Scripture expreſsly requires our keeping out of the way of all *familiarity* with ſuch tempers; and to have no fellowſhip with thoſe, that love and practiſe evil and miſchief. "Go from the preſence "of a fooliſh man, when thou perceiveſt "not the lips of knowledge [p]. Make no "friendſhip with an angry man: And with a "furious man thou ſhalt not go, leſt thou "learn his ways, and get a ſnare unto thy

[n] Job xxxi. 29, 30. [o] Prov. xxiv. 17.
[p] Prov. xiv. 7.

"ſoul.

" ſoul [q]. Be not thou envious againſt evil " men, neither deſire to be with them: For " their heart ſtudieth deſtruction, and their " lips talk of miſchief [r]." Wherever that temper and converſation is, a good man ſhould chooſe to have nothing to do. " Do " not I hate them that hate thee, O Lord, " am not I grieved with thoſe that riſe up " againſt thee? I hate them with perfect " hatred, I count them mine enemies [s]." The averſion there encouraged, to thoſe vile and odious characters which make men haters of GOD, is ſuch, as to have a ſincere abhorrence of them, ſo far as they are haters of GOD. Though at the ſame time, a perſonal good will, and a moſt earneſt deſire to ſee them brought to a better mind, is very conſiſtent with ſuch an averſion.

In ſhort, a love of *complacence*, or freedom with an enemy, there cannot be. But an avoiding all communion with an envious hating ſpirit, and diſpoſition, is to follow our rule. " Be ye not unequally yoked together " with unbelievers: For what fellowſhip " hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? " And what communion hath light with " darkneſs? And what concord hath Chriſt " with *Belial* [t]?" Yet ſtill there may be a generous benevolent temper, in wiſhing well to ſuch an one; that he may be brought to a

[q] Prov. xxii. 24, 25.
[r] Ibid. xxiv. 1, 2
[s] Pſal. cxxxix. 21, 22.
[t] 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

better

better diſpoſition: And if any occaſion offers for us to ſhew him a kindneſs, we muſt ſtand ready to do it.

III. We may next proceed to enquire into the *reaſons* of this command.

However men of corrupt minds ſet themſelves againſt it, and repreſent it as an unreaſonable impracticable thing, we ſhall find the Scripture hath enjoined it upon ſuch a foot, as makes it highly fit, and excellent, and really for our happineſs to comply with it.

It is to require nothing more of us, than what GOD himſelf ſets us an example of. It is a neceſſary branch of that religion, that calls us to *do more*, than the common part of mankind do. It has a proportionable advanced reward annexed to it. Malice, envy, and ſuch like diſpoſitions, are marks of folly and diſobedience. Vengeance is GOD's, not ours. And ſometimes an enemy is melted and won over by love. Theſe are the reaſons given for this command in Scripture; and very juſt, powerful reaſons they are, if ſeriouſly weighed.

1. To love our enemies, and do good to them that hate us, is what GOD teacheth us by his *own example*. "For he maketh his "ſun to riſe on the evil, and on the good; "and ſendeth rain on the juſt, and unjuſt [y]." "He is kind unto the unthankful and to

[y] Matth. v. 45.

" the evil [w]." That we may in this, as well as other things, take our pattern from God, we are to remember that *endearing relation* into which he hath taken us. Though we our ſelves were enemies, and in a ſtate of evil and unthankfulneſs to him, as well as others, yet he hath made us *children*. " Be " ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo " is merciful [x]." By thus ſhewing yourſelves partakers of his nature, and by imitating the Son of his love, who bleſſed and pray'd for his revilers and perſecutors, yea for his very murderers, you will alſo become the children of your Father which is in heaven. His perfection lies, in not altering the meaſures and proofs of his love and goodneſs, for all the hatred blaſphemy and evil returns, that he meets with from unjuſt unthankful men. They may throw themſelves beyond the meaſures of all reaſonable goodneſs, but the goodneſs of God remains ſtill in thoſe meaſures unchangeable.

2. To love our enemies, and do good for hatred and ill-will, is a neceſſary branch of that religion that calls us *to do more* than the common part of the world do.

Chriſtianity profeſſedly calls men to nobler hopes, and to a higher ſtate of goodneſs, than either nature, or any other religions on earth could lead men to. Therefore, when our Saviour gave directions to his diſciples,

[w] Luke vi. 35. [x] Ibid. ver. 36.

to

to act agreeably to his deſign in calling them out of the world, he pleads thus with them: "If ye ſalute your brethren only, what do "you more than others? Do not even the "publicans ſo [y]? If you do good to them "which do good to you, what thank have "you? For ſinners alſo do the ſame. And "if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to "receive, what thank have ye? For ſin-"ners alſo lend to ſinners to receive as much "again [z]." In going thus far, there is no need of ſuch extraordinary grace, as that which I am come to manifeſt and declare unto you; nor of thoſe higher and greater aſſiſtances that I provide, and will give. Look to men that are in a ſtate of evil, and in the common way of the world (notwithſtanding all its corruption and degeneracy) and you will find that, for the moſt part, this is a prevailing principle with mankind, —To ſhew kindneſs, where they receive kindneſs. They will make returns to any friend that lends to them, and helps them in a time of great neceſſity. Though ſome particular men may become ſo monſtrouſly vicious, and ungrateful, as not to follow theſe dictates of *human nature*; yet they are commonly a rule to all ſorts, even publicans and ſinners. Thoſe very men for whom you have the leaſt value, and the meaneſt opinion go thus far. But as Chriſtianity calls you

[y] Matth. v. 47. [z] Luke vi. 33, 34.

to act in a higher ſphere, and with nobler views, your generous goodneſs ought to enlarge beyond thoſe that love you, and are kind to you; even to them that hate you, and deſpitefully uſe you.

3. To love your enemies and do good for hatred has a *proportionable reward*, an *advanced reward* annexed to it.

This is expreſſed in general terms in the Old Teſtament, that *feeding* and *refreſhing* an enemy, would be a *heaping of coals of fire* on his head; (*i. e.*) either to melt down his enmity, or to prove an occaſion of ſure and ſpeedy vengeance. In ſuch a caſe 'tis ſpecially promiſed, "The Lord ſhall reward "thee [a]."

In the New Teſtament, our Saviour ſpeaking of the common way of returning one kindneſs with another, aſks this queſtion. "If ye love them which love you, what re"ward have ye [b]?" Nothing is to be expected further, than what ariſeth from ſuch expreſſions of love; namely, that benefit and advantage which ariſeth from *mutual kindneſs*, and which is common to all that live in ſuch friendly intercourſes. But this evidently implies, that a much greater and more extraordinary reward will follow upon loving an enemy as the Goſpel requires. St. *Luke* therefore ſays, "your reward ſhall be great, and ye "ſhall be the children of the higheſt [c]."

[a] Prov. xxv. 22. [b] Matth. v. 46. [c] Luke vi. 35.

This

This being done in faith, with pure regards to GOD, and as looking for the reward only from him, it will prove us his children, and intitle us to an inheritance with him, the higheſt and greateſt of all beings, and the ſovereign diſpoſer of all things.

4. Malice, and revenge, and ſuch like evil diſpoſitions, are *marks of folly*, and of an *unruly* diſobedient temper. Therefore we ſhould not give way to theſe, but rather pardon and love thoſe that hate us.

St. *Paul* deſcribing an unregenerate ſtate to *Titus*, ſays, " That we ourſelves were ſome-" times fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived; " And then their way was " to live in malice " and envy, hateful and hating one ano-" ther [d]." This is falſly called courage by the paſſionate, bluſtering, and unthinking part of the world. They imagine it an argument of a man's being a fooliſh cowardly man, to put up any *ſignal affront*. But it is, in reality, an argument of a much greater mind, to ſhew a command over itſelf when provoked; and not ſuddenly to fire, and run into fury, nor ſlowly to meditate and reſolve upon revenge.

When men come to a right and ſerious conſideration of things, they will find it the eaſieſt matter in the world to raiſe hatreds and violent paſſions; and to run into them with eagerneſs, when they ſee others engaged in

[d] Titus iii. 3.

them: But they will find no wiſdom, or dutiful regards either to GOD or men, in a courſe of animoſities and contentions. The Scripture condemns ſuch as *deceived* men. They are under baſe and groſs miſtakes, and are really fooliſh, and carried into all manner of diſobedience, by following the dictates of anger and hatred. True greatneſs of mind, is placed in a conduct directly contrary: "The diſcretion of a man deferreth "his anger; and it is his glory to paſs over "a tranſgreſſion [e]."

5. We ſhould do good for hatred, becauſe *vengeance* is GOD's, not ours.

We may ſo miſtake, as to count thoſe enemies and haters of us, that are ſincerely concerned for our good. We may take up ſuch an ill opinion of them, as *Ahab* did of *Elijah*, only becauſe they "tell us the truth." Therefore it is not fit that vengeance ſhould be left to be exerciſed by men one over another. Sometimes a man might be cut off as an enemy, in a ſingle injurious act, or in a ſudden evil temper of mind, that may afterward repent himſelf, and become a moſt ſincere and *uſeful friend*. But where any one really is, and continues to be, an enemy to *us*; he is not more guilty of evil againſt *us*, than againſt GOD; and GOD knows better how to expoſe his enmity, by juſt and proper puniſhments, than we do. Therefore

[e] Prov. xix. 11.

the

the argument is ſtrong, "Avenge not your "ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath. "For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I "will repay, ſay ſaith the Lord [f]." In another place, the rule is ſtated thus: "Say "not thou I will recompence evil; but wait "on the Lord, and he ſhall ſave thee [g]."

The *laſt* reaſon for loving and doing good to an enemy, is, the poſſibility of *conquering his enmity* thereby.

A hateful and hating temper once fixed and ſettled, is not indeed *curable* by any expreſſions of forbearance and goodneſs; but will rather grow worſe, more inſolent and abuſive, and full of poiſon and contempt. But goodneſs may probably overcome the *firſt beginnings* of enmity; and will melt and ſoften the ſpirits of by-ſtanders, to ſee all the expreſſions of gentleneſs and kindneſs reigning, againſt reſentments, and hatred, and ill uſage.

We have a very moving inſtance of the power of kindneſs, in oppoſition to hatred, and ſeeking the very life of another; when *David* ſhewed *Saul* the ſkirt of his robe, and could eaſily at that time have avenged himſelf, in letting any of his followers take away *Saul*'s life. At that time, ſparing him, and hindering his men from doing him any hurt, *Saul* was ſo affected with *David*'s carriage, that he *lift up his voice and wept* when

[f] Rom. xii. 19. [g] Prov. xx. 22.

he pronounced thoſe remarkable words; "Thou art more righteous than I: For "thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I "have rewarded thee evil [h]." So that place before quoted is underſtood by many, to mean a *diſſolving* and *melting down* the hatred and ill-will of an enemy, when it is ſaid that kind actions are a *heaping of coals of fire* on his head.

Thus I have gone through the Scripture account of loving our enemies, and doing good to them that hate us, with the reaſons alledged for our obſerving this difficult precept. Though it be allowed to be a vaſt difficulty, in the practice of our religion; yet the reaſons given are ſufficient to enforce it.

To make this command of Chriſt an *objection* againſt Chriſtianity, is an argument of ſtrong paſſions, but a weak mind.

The objectors may think they ſay very witty and ſtriking things, in their pleading that when Chriſt bids them *love an enemy*, he might as well have required them to *ſwallow poiſon*, to take *toads* and *vipers* into their boſoms. To love one that hath ſought our life, or hath taken away that which is dear as life, or would do ſo if it was in his power, is ſomething contrary to all the *laws of nature*. We might as well be bid to do the

[h] 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17.

moſt

moſt miraculous thing, and the greateſt contradiction that can be offered to nature.

This may look like ingenuity, but is really a very raſh and haſty way of determining matters; and offers nothing in anſwer to the reaſons, which the Scripture lays down to enforce this command. For, if they would think cloſely, they have little reaſon to talk againſt loving enemies, who are in love with *known ſin*. That is to ſwallow poiſon indeed, and to nouriſh worſe than toads and vipers in their boſoms. Beſides that, they who have been *moſt* addicted to vice, and ſinful indulgence of their paſſions, yet on ſome extraordinary occaſions, and upon views of temporal intereſt, have ſhewn kindneſs and good-will to their worſt enemies. Some men, for the ſake of gaining their point in *politicks*, and others, to ſerve their intereſt in a way of *gain*, will put up much ill-will and ill uſage, and expreſs kindneſs to thoſe whom they know to be enemies. And is there not much more to engage a mind, that hath a true ſenſe of religion, to do ſo for GOD's ſake, and Chriſt's ſake, and to ſecure the higher and everlaſting *rewards* of a future ſtate? To ſay, that the Goſpel calls us to a very great *difficulty* in this caſe, is to ſay nothing, unleſs it could be ſhewn that it is not practicable to human nature. For if it may be practiſed on *any other conſiderations*, ſure it may be practiſed upon

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the views and reaſons of religion. It is therefore only to declare, that religion has not that weight with us that a view of temporal intereſt has, or the compaſſing a deſign in politicks, to make us conquer a reſentment, and do good in return to evil and hatred.

But I muſt confeſs, it is very unſuitable to the common temper of mankind, to diſcourſe on ſuch a ſubject as this. The temper that prevails, will hardly allow men to be kind and grateful to thoſe, from whom they receive nothing but kindneſs and expreſſions of good-will. Moſt men and women are ſo far from loving their *enemies*, that they have no true and abiding love to their *friends*. So far from doing good to thoſe that *hate* them, as to think it much if they do good to thoſe that love and value them, and are moſt deſirous of their welfare. So far from bleſſing thoſe that *curſe* them, that, on the other hand, they revile, and wiſh ill to ſuch as moſt ſincerely *bleſs* them and wiſh them bleſſed. In ſuch a ſtate of things it muſt be acknowledged, that to tell of loving enemies is to ſpeak with very little proſpect of ſucceſs, or ſo much as gaining civil notice and regard.

However, I could not ſatisfy my ſelf in treating on this ſubject of chriſtian Charity, without urging this branch of it, on which our bleſſed Saviour has ſeen fit to lay great

weight.

weight. It is therefore made one part of the *whole counſel of* GOD, to be declared by us. Some, I hope, that read this, will reſolve upon uſing their utmoſt endeavours to riſe to this perfection in the chriſtian life. And as every day will give occaſion of returning love for hatred, bleſſing for curſing, good for evil, in one way or other, I would hope you will give daily and continual proofs of this temper, as an ornament to your profeſſion, and the beſt way to ſtop that current of enmity, revilings, and hatreds, that run ſo ſtrong at preſent.

If what has been ſaid excite ſuch diſpoſitions, and reſolutions in any heart, ſuch will be glad to follow thoſe advices that may help them to practiſe this duty. I ſhall therefore cloſe this diſcourſe with the directions following.

1. Don't look upon one that hates you, as if he had *nothing valuable* in him, becauſe he carries it ſo ill to you. He may have many good qualities, and may be a very uſeful man in ſome ways, though he is certainly wrong, and acts very unjuſtifiably, in being your enemy. Speak well, and think well, of what is well and excellent in him, and that will do ſomething to allay your averſion to him.

2. Don't look upon any man's enmity meerly as it *dwells in him*, but think what may be the deſigns of an all-wiſe over-ruling

Providence, in permitting that *ill-will* of his to fall *upon you.* As *David* when *Shimei* curſed him, did not ſo much lay to heart the enmity of that *diſaffected* man to his perſon and family, as GOD's *ſending* him at that time to be the inſtrument of ſuch an affliction. It was the ſaying of a good man, that injuries may become gems and precious ſtones. They may be ſo taken, and improved, as to become ornaments to us. Or if they really fix *dirt* upon us, yet that may only ſerve to pelt and drive the ſoul to its haven. An enemy may ſometimes do more to promote watchfulneſs, and prayer, and ſelf-poſſeſſion, than all the perſuaſions in the world in a ſofter way. An evil tongue may ſometimes make us more diligent in the way of our duty, and more deſirous to get to heaven.

3. Conſider how much there is to *excite pity*, toward thoſe that are in a ſtate of enmity. They are often very unhappy in themſelves, by giving way to ſuch a temper. And you look upon one in *miſery*, as an object of pity. If they ſhew no uneaſineſs, but brave it out in the continuance of their ill-will, they are ſtrangers to the *new nature* of chriſtian love and goodneſs; and therefore ſtill to be pitied, as men in the way to *endleſs miſery* and ruin. This will excite a deſire, rather to help and recover them, than to fall into a like temper and ſpirit with them.

4. Study much the *example of Chriſt*, in his carriage to his enemies, and his praying for his *very murderers*. He was led as a *lamb to the ſlaughter*, and opened not his mouth, either to revile thoſe that reviled him, or to murmur againſt the providence of GOD. Father *forgive them!* was his dying language for the worſt and cruelest enemies, that ever human nature had to ſtruggle with. Serious and frequent applications to the *Sacrament* of Chriſt's body and blood, and there contemplating all the wonders of his *croſs*, will make us more and more get above the ſpirit of enmity and ill-will. "While "we were yet enemies, he died for us."

5. *Pray* to GOD for this diſpoſition of mind. All the arguments in the world will not have ſuch effect in this caſe as fervent believing prayer. Prayer will carry us to adore the perfections of our heavenly Father in all his kindneſs to the unthankful and unjuſt. And ſo, in our very adorations, we ſhall fall into much of that diſpoſition which we praiſe and magnifie in GOD. And then, if we beg his grace and ſpirit, to make us more like himſelf in this reſpect, he will give the ſpirit to them that ask him. Add, yet further, That whilſt we are praying for *better ſpirits* to be given to our enemies, we ſhall find our *own ſpirits* better diſpoſed toward them.

In the laſt place: Search out ſome *engaging*

ing examples of this good and generous carriage towards enemies, amongſt men like ourſelves; and be more ambitious of coming up to them, than of falling into the moſt effectual ways of revenge.

A ſerious writer on this ſubject, has picked ſome paſſages out of *hiſtory*, worthy to be had in continual remembrance.

Phocion, when unjuſtly condemned by the *Athenians*, before his death being aſked, Whether he had any commands to his ſon? ſaid, "Go and tell him that I charge "him to forget the injuries the *Athenians* "have done me." *Euſebius Samoſatenſis*, dying of a wound which had been given him by throwing a great ſtone at his head, requeſted the magiſtrate of the town before he died, "That the perſon, who in fury and "enmity gave him that wound, might not "ſuffer, nor be any way moleſted for that "fact."

Alexander of *Jeruſalem*, having a ſervant that robbed him of a conſiderable ſum of money, and afterward hearing of his miſery, and that he was to be ſold for a ſlave, he ſent and *redeemed him*, and paid down the *price* for his ranſom.

Many ſuch inſtances are recorded in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, on which account this was ſtyled the proper and *diſtinguiſhing virtue* of Chriſtians. To theſe I may add the paſſage of *Anthony* the *Great*, who in his

his exhortations to the people, wiſhed them always to keep in mind that of the *Apoſtle*, "Let not the ſun go down upon thy wrath." He lived to the age of 105.

One of the Patriarchs of *Alexandria*, being uſed with much choler and contention by a chief man of the city, ſent a meſſenger to him in the evening only to ſay this, "The "ſun is going down;" which had ſuch an effect upon the citizen, that he melted into tears, and came in haſte to be reconciled.

If we look to ſome of our nation, we ſhall find men of *as kind* and *generous* diſpoſitions. It was the ſaying of Mr. *Palmer* the martyr, "None are to be counted valiant, but "ſuch as contemn injuries."

I will rather ſuffer a thouſand wrongs than offer one; (ſaith Dr. *Hall*;) "I will ſuffer ma-"ny e're I complain of one, and endeavour "to right my ſelf by contending." *Cranmer* was noted for kindneſs to thoſe that did him ill turns. And Sir *Matthew Hale* (afterward *Judge*) having one come to him for advice in the ſettlement of an eſtate, he not only gave him the beſt advice, but refuſed to accept of any Fee: And when he was aſked (as Dr. *Burnet relates*) "How he could uſe "a man ſo *kindly*, that had wrong'd him ſo "much?" his anſwer was, "I thank GOD "I have learned to *forget injuries*.

I ſhall add no more on this ſubject, but only wiſh for my ſelf and all that read this, that

that we may copy after ſuch examples; and may be ſo good to thoſe that ſhew their ill tempers toward us, that we may be *perfect, as our Father who is in Heaven is perfect.*

SECTION VII.

Obſervations *and* Directions.

I Shall now conclude this ſcripture eſſay upon Charity with the following *obſervations* and *directions.*

1. We may obſerve the excellency of our holy religion, in its contriving to render men *ſo good to one another.* Chriſtianity would have no temper or turn of mind indulged, that ſhall make us in the leaſt hurtful, or unfriendly. It would have us to be very tender of every man's reputation, rather covering faults than expoſing and aggravating them; and to put on bowels of mercy and the greateſt compaſſion to all that are in affliction and diſtreſs. It is the glory of the Goſpel to teach men to deny themſelves for the good of others; and where it is ſincerely believed, it will cure a ſinful *ſelfiſhneſs*, and make us always contrive *others* advantage together with our own.

Chriſtianity is formed not only for the future

ture ſalvation of particular perſons, but for the welfare of *ſocieties.* And thoſe precepts in our religion that require us to bear injuries well, to *mortify* corrupt affections and paſſions, and to take up *our croſs*, are deſigned to make us more uſeful and beneficial to thoſe about us. And they are only ungrateful and hard to us till we are brought to the perfection of Charity.

Aſk thoſe that know, what it is heartily to love a friend or relation? and they will tell you, that love makes it a pleaſure to give up their own inclinations and ſelf-intereſt, that they may oblige and promote the welfare of the object beloved. Let this particular affection become an univerſal benevolence, with the like fervency and vigour, and then we have attained to a Charity that will make ſocieties as happy as particular friends.

All that goodneſs and humanity now pretended to by the oppoſers of revealed religion, would appear (as it really is) very imperfect and a meer ſhadow; if chriſtian Charity, which is the ſubſtance, could be revived in its primitive extent and luſtre. As therefore benevolence and good nature are ſet up, to be the main promoters of *Deiſm* at preſent, let us endeavour to exceed in this way, and our religion will triumph againſt all their other attacks.

By love, the *truth* will be beſt explain'd,

and

and the knowledge of it moſt eaſily and effectualy ſpread. And then *faith* will exalt the minds of men to a world of perfect love and goodneſs, inſtead of ſetting them at variance amongſt themſelves.

2. We may obſerve how much the diſpoſitions of Charity tend to ſecure our *own happineſs*, while we are employed to promote the good of others. For want of duly conſidering this, and not taking pains to cultivate and improve the *benevolent temper*, we ſee the quiet of many good people loſt and deſtroy'd.

The order of our affairs, and the compoſure of our minds, are liable continually to be broken in upon by one incidence and oppoſition or other, and ſometimes by very trifling occurrences. How many ſtorms are raiſed, and how many indecencies are we unwarily betray'd into, and all ariſing from very ſmall temptations, for want of a quick adverting to ſome of the *plaineſt rules* of Charity? Theſe temptations will ſtill come with renewed force, and our own infirmities will render every thing doubly grievous, and outward inconveniences will, by degrees, either ſink and baffle our ſpirits, or enflame and diſtract them, if Charity do not gain the better and habitually calm our minds.

In a *diſcourſe upon happineſs* in this life, I have met with a paſſage much to my preſent purpoſe. It is as followeth. 'To frame

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'and accommodate the mind to bear the 'little ſhocks and juſtles we meet with, 'without any diſpleaſure and diſcompoſure, 'is a matter of great uſe to our preſent tran-'quility, and to the maturity of virtue. To 'be able to bear the *pride* of one, and the '*ſtupidity* of another; one while to encoun-'ter *rudeneſs*, another while *neglect*, without 'being moved by either; to ſubmit to noiſe, 'diſorder, and the diſtraction of many little 'affairs, when one is naturally a lover of '*quietneſs* and *order*, or when the mind is 'intent upon things of importance; in ſhort, 'to ſuffer all the humours, and follies, the 'errors, crafts, and indecencies, and faults 'of thoſe we have to do with, ſo as to pre-'ſerve that temper of mind which we ought; 'this, and this alone, is to have a mind 'form'd for happineſs.'

To have ſuch a ſerenity of ſoul, not proceeding from an unconcernment for the good of others, but from a juſt dominion over our own ſpirits, this is the *height* of *goodneſs* which ought to be our continual aim. Unleſs, therefore, Charity *grow* in us, it is certain uneaſineſs will, as the temptations and evils of life come upon us. We are on this account making *our ſelves* happy, when we ſhew a forbearing, forgiving, benevolent temper toward others.

3. We may obſerve the difference there is, betwixt *ſenſual* love, and that which is truly *religious*.

Senſual love often produceth the greateſt uneaſineſs, and breaks out into many ill things; and as it lies wholly in the region of the paſſions and the ſtrength of appetite; ſo the other paſſions are frequently thrown into grievous tumults and diſorders by it. But *religious* love greatens and ſooths the mind, and is ever intent upon what is *good*. It raiſeth the ſpirit to a region quite above ſtorms and tempeſts, and like the pure Æther makes it uniformly ſmooth and placid. Tho' clouds may ſometimes hang over ſuch a ſoul, and hide it from the view of thoſe that converſe with the body, yet when thoſe clouds are diſpers'd it appears what it truly is.

To illuſtrate this, we may compare the love of *Joſeph*'s *miſtreſs*, with the generous good diſpoſition of *Joſeph himſelf*.

Her love was reſtleſs, and impatient: It would have injured her huſband, and corrupted his ſteward; and when it could not gain its ends, it abuſes both. A contrivance is form'd baſely to *deceive* the maſter, and to rob him of the *beſt ſervant* that ever was in his family; and at the ſame time, to caſt an innocent, and uſeful man, into priſon. There was a continual ſcene of falſhood, and a moſt hurtful violent agitation of the paſſions in all this love.

Joſeph, on the other hand, was great of mind, and full of goodneſs. Speaking of the faith-

faithful regards that he had to the *rights* of his Lord, and the gratitude he owed to a maſter who repoſed ſuch an *intire truſt* in him. At the ſame time, he was careful no way to reproach or injure his Miſtreſs; but only for his own ſafety, fled from her preſence. And when he was by her falſe witneſſing condemn'd to a priſon, he endured patiently the treatment he there met with, till it pleaſed an obſervant Providence to make ſo much goodneſs and fidelity ſhine forth in the higheſt advancement. O glorious Charity! thus to ſurvive and conquer all the fires, both of luſt and anger, of iniquity and reſentment.

Afterward, when he became a prince we find him acknowledging, pardoning, and cheriſhing his injurious brethren; tho' they firſt conſulted to *murder* him, and when they could not agree in That ſold him for a *ſlave*. They hated him, and caſt him out from his father's houſe; but he nouriſhed them in a time of famine, and provided a place of ſettlement and plenty for them. Here his generous ſoul again manifeſted it ſelf in acts of love, too tender to be related or read with dry eyes. In this inſtance we ſee Charity in all its extent of mind, and in its communicative kindneſs, without envy, or vaunting, or being puffed up; without any unſeemly behaviour, or ſinful ſeeking its own; without any fits of fury or imputation of

evil but what was needful to bring to repentance, and then himſelf diſſolving over the penitent. He rejoiced not in iniquity, when he might have made great advantage of it; but rejoiced in the truth, tho' in a priſon. Thus covering, believing, hoping, and enduring all things.

This, as it is one of the moſt wonderful ſtories upon earth, no doubt was celebrated alſo in the anthems of heaven. Theſe examples give us a moſt affecting diſplay of the difference betwixt *ſenſual* and *religious* love. Add to theſe the example of our *own* Apoſtle in Chriſtianity, (I mean St. *Paul* the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles) and there we ſhall ſee in one life, the difference betwixt *zeal* or *fire* in an unſanctified conſtitution, and chriſtian Charity in a renewed nature.

4. That I may give further weight to all that hath been ſaid, I muſt obſerve, that the foregoing rules of Charity are not to be read as if they were only *ornamental* in religion, but in ſome meaſure *neceſſary* to our acceptance with God. They are to be practiſed by us throughout the chriſtian life; and, in ſome degree, they are neceſſary to prepare us for heaven: For no uncharitable ſoul can enter there.

It is not, indeed, to be ſuppoſed that every man who ſhall find *mercy* with God, doth perfectly attain to *all* the characters of Charity; but every man is obliged *ſincerely* to endeavour

endeavour it: And the higher any man's attainments are, the nearer will his manſion be to the fountain of love and goodneſs. After all paſt contentions and animoſities, all hatreds and covetouſneſs, all envies and reproachings, which we have been guilty of; we may ſtill be happy if we now enter into the element of chriſtian love, and ſet our ſelves to a careful diligent obſervance of the Scripture rules and examples of Charity.

Above all, we are ſteddily to look to JESUS, and copy after his temper and behaviour.

The goſpel deſcriptions and recommendations of Charity, are not to be read as if they were only the admonitions of *men*, but as they declare the *will* of GOD. We ought indeed to pay great regard to the writings of wiſe and uſeful men, when they communicate things that are proper to enlarge and better the mind. It is highly becoming every thoughtful and prudent perſon, to form his ſentiments, and manners, by the nobleſt and beſt writings of great and generous ſouls. A *Seneca*, a *Cicero*, a *Bacon*, a *Hale*, a *Lock*, may all have their uſe in conducting the underſtandings and paſſions of men: And thoſe readers that ſtudy the writings of this kind, are beyond all compariſon better employ'd, than they, who ſpend their time in mean and trifling curioſities, or in falſe and romantic vicious and corrupt eſſays and poems. But

But even the beſt of meer human writers have no *authority* to command our obedience, and to *oblige* us to fall in with the things they propoſe. Whereas, the uſeful charitable actions and the extenſive benevolence which the Scriptures require, and recommend, are back'd with the authority of the all-wiſe and perfectly good GOD. So that if we are heedleſs, or diſobedient to him, all other pretences of goodneſs will not be accepted, when he comes to ponder and weigh the ſpirits of men, and to render to every man according to his works.

5. We may further obſerve, (the better to guard the ſubject I am upon from being diſgraced,) that no pretences of Charity ſhould carry a man *from his ſtedfaſtneſs*, or make him act contrary to the perſuaſion of his *own mind*.

It is a very unhappy thing, that ſome people have no ſooner been brought to entertain charitable ſentiments of others, but they have preſently grown cold and indifferent to thoſe truths and ways they had choſen before. They forget that *conſtancy* and *integrity* in adhering to the word of GOD, and to what their own conſciences tell them is moſt agreeable to it, is *as much* their duty, as to have Charity for thoſe that are otherwiſe minded.

Then only does chriſtian love appear in its true luſtre and glory, when we are ſtrict-

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ly faithful to our *own reaſon* and *judgment*; and, from a juſt ſenſe of the high regards GOD hath to ſuch, do preſerve our affection for others that act with the ſame ſteddineſs and honeſty, though in ſome ways of worſhip or life *different* from our ſelves.

It is indeed too evident to be overlook'd, that weak and fickle minds, and alſo thoſe that have any particular intereſt to ſerve in the world, do take occaſion from the doctrine of Charity to run into *faſhionable errors*, and to go from one communion of Chriſtians to another. This, however, is by no means to be charged upon a preaching up of Love and Charity; nor ſhould we have the *worſe opinion* of it, for the ſake of them who make ſo wrong and ill a *uſe* of it. They break with *one ſet* of acquaintance, to fall in with another: They forſake *one way* of worſhip, to confine themſelves to another: They defame, and cenſure, and deſpiſe thoſe of *one opinion*, to applaud and to magnify thoſe of another. But where is chriſtian Charity, what becomes of general benevolence and good-will all this while?

The more we obſerve of this abuſe of Charity, to make it only a bridge for paſſing over from one ſtate of *uncharitableneſs* to another; the more ſhould we ſtrengthen our ſelves in a cloſe adherence to the word of GOD; and in kind well regulated reſolutions to ſhew what hath our *choice* and *preference*,

ference, and what we look upon or comply with only in a way of Charity. Upon this foot, allowing for different opinions, whilſt we make the *ſettlement* of our own judgments our care and ſtudy; and allowing *occaſional communion* with one or other body of Chriſtians, whilſt our *ſtated communion* declares where we apprehend the ſcripture terms of communion are beſt obſerved: Upon this foot, I ſay, both *ſtedfaſtneſs* and *Charity* may be preſerved; and both may have their excellency in their places, and will be of uſe to ſociety.

Let us therefore attend to the *word of* God, in all our exerciſes of this excellent grace, or virtue. And that our endeavours to be perfect in it, may be more and more ſucceſsful, let us keep the *directions* following upon our minds.

We muſt *pray* to God unweariedly, and continually, that he would *make us to increaſe and abound in love*, or elſe we ſhall not be able to preſerve this happy temper. Whilſt we are addreſſing to infinite love and goodneſs, and imploring particular proofs of it to our ſelves, ſuch addreſſes have an aptitude to form our ſpirits into ſomething of a likeneſs to the object we adore. And I think theſe two things are true in fact and experience, *viz.* that thoſe minds, which have moſt of love and gratitude in them, are moſt inclinable to devotion;

tion; and then again thoſe that are truly *devout*, without ſuperſtition or party zeal, are moſt addicted to acts of Charity and kindneſs.

Prayer hath the promiſe of the *ſpirit* of love and holineſs. It cannot be accepted without our profeſſing *mercy* and *forgiveneſs* to others. And it unites all in one common head and *mediator*, and one common *end*, ſeeking the kingdom of GOD and eternal life. Thus prayer promotes and encreaſeth Charity: But you will always find, that as the *ſpirit* of *prayer* (or ſupplication) is loſt in the chriſtian world, ſo charity and love amongſt Chriſtians *waxeth cold*. They that have not Charity to pray for one another, are not likely to ſhew much charity in any thing elſe.

Therefore to encourage and ſucceed our prayers, let us ſtudy much the *enlargement* of our *minds*: With meekneſs and humility begging bleſſings for all, even for them that curſe us or deſpitefully uſe us. He that aims at a true greatneſs of mind, a more *generous* and communicative *diſpoſition* of *heart*, will from hence learn to correct envy, and pride, and ſelfiſhneſs, and paſſion, and every thing that looks mean and reviling. But you may recommend all the bleſſed fruits of Charity long enough, if there be not an enlarged and a kind heart no perſuaſions will be ſufficient to produce them. Look therefore principally and diligently to the *heart* in this matter.

And be humbled and penitent for all *uncharitableneſs*, as it is no leſs a contradiction to that temper of mind that ſhall fit us for heaven, than groſs *ſenſuality*. Here a good man will find work for continual watchfulneſs, as long as he is in the body. And after that, we ſhall need infinite mercy and compaſſion to cover and pardon the *remains* of uncharitableneſs in us.

But, to go on: Let our *intimacies* and friendſhips be rather choſen, from obſerving where the greateſt Charity is, and where a *general benevolence* reigns; than where there is moſt profeſſion of *perſonal* love and affection. Friendſhips of the former ſort will enlarge our ſouls, whilſt the latter too often contract them; and the firſt will hold, when the others fail. Our uniting with extenſively kind and generous minds, will continually give occaſion for *freſh exerciſes* of goodneſs in one way or other, and ſo ſtrengthen the intimacy and endearment perpetually.

Further: To preſerve Charity we muſt always endeavour to maintain a *cheerful freedom* and openneſs of temper, in all our converſation; and carefully watch againſt a diſtruſtful ſelf-deſigning *reſerve*. Every man loves a friend and companion that is open and honeſt, whatever he is himſelf. There are ſuch charms in a chearful eaſy temper, as give a continual pleaſure, when kept within the rules of civility and reſpect according to the character

of

of the perſons with whom we have to do.

Don't decline any company or converſation which ſuits your place and buſineſs, and where you may be of ſervice, though you know you ſhall meet with thoſe by whom your Charity will be *greatly tried.* This will oblige you to ſtudy the rules of Charity more carefully, and will by degrees enable you to amend thoſe errors which you diſcover, both in the diſagreeable tempers of others, and in what you perceive is offenſive in your own. And by thus learning to regulate your own paſſions, you will know how to regulate others too; or at leaſt to bear them, with a firm and ſelf-poſſeſſing mind.

Again: We ſhould *daily* uſe our ſelves to ſome *acts* of *benevolence*, and contrive our affairs that we may do ſo. That is, we muſt order both our *time*, and *expences*, ſo as to leave room for works of mercy and kindneſs as much as our neceſſary charges and buſineſs will allow. It is by repeated acts of goodneſs, that an habitual diſpoſition muſt be acquired, and maintain'd. The more we abound in uſeful beneficent actions, the more ſhall we excite the goodneſs and love of them that intimately converſe with us. And ſo we ſhall dwell more in goodneſs, than in the hatreds and diſorders of the world. Add to this, that *one branch* of Charity carefully ſtudied and practiſed, will open the heart to *others*, and ſhew us the beauty of all.

I knew a perſon, who upon ſeriouſly reading Mr. *Gouge's* * book on the *ſureſt and ſafeſt way of thriving*, reſolved to devote ſome part of his *ſtated gains* to charitable uſes. He begun with a *twentieth part*; and finding a ſatisfaction and pleaſure in ſome things this carried him to, about four years after he came to lay by a *tenth* part. As this enabled him ſtill to increaſe the *number* of uſeful charitable actions, he found his pleaſure ſtill grow, in the good will of his fellow-creatures, and in the grateful diſpoſition of his own heart toward GOD. Then Providence ſupplied him more abundantly, by other perſons putting ſums of money into his hands, to be diſtributed by him in ſeveral ways of Charity.

After ſome time he went ſo far as to allot a *ſeventh* part of his own eſtate, for acts of kindneſs or relief to relations, while the *tenth* of his gains otherways was continued for public and more common Charities. Hereupon much greater ſupplies were ſent in to him, both by ſome perſons living, and by others in their wills at death. In ſome diſtributions, he had *ſpecial orders* to take in thoſe

* *Of whom Archbiſhop* Tillotſon *ſays, that he employ'd all his time and care and pains in works of Charity, and his whole heart was in them.—So that all things conſidered there have not, ſince the primitive time of Chriſtianity, been many among the* ſons of men *to whom that glorious character of the* Son *of* GOD *might be better applied, that he* went about doing good. See Funeral Sermon of the Reverend Mr. *T. Gouge.*

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of different communions, and to ſhew no *partiality* to one or other denomination of Chriſtians.

It is eaſy to obſerve, how one ſtep after another enlargeth ſuch a man's mind in other exerciſes of Charity, as well as in relieving the needy. And then, only ſuppoſe ſuch a perſon, while thus employ'd, meeting with inſtances of ingratitude, envy, and narrow ſelfiſh tempers; (as it muſt certainly be expected where many are concerned, *all* will not prove grateful and of generous minds;) then come in the *other rules* of Charity to be obſerved.

By ſuch a courſe as this, a man who begins with ſmaller and leſs frequent acts of beneficence, may be owned and bleſs'd of God, and may riſe to many opportunities of *doing good*. And if he unweariedly go on in *well doing*, and get above ſlights and enmities, then he gains the *perfection* of Charity; and becomes ſo like his heavenly Father, as to be able to return *kindneſs*, and to ſhew *favour*, even to the unjuſt and unthankful.

Once more: We ſhould take care never to ſeparate *Piety* and *Charity*, or to boaſt of the one in a neglect of the other. There can be no true abiding Charity toward men, without the *love* of God: And there can be no true love to God, without the love of our *brethren*. The higher our piety and

holineſs riſe, the more ſhall we affect and delight in examples of Charity and goodneſs, wherever we ſee them; and we ſhall take care to glorify God in all. Both the kind heart, and the opportunites of ſhewing it ſelf, are of God; and therefore true piety will take care not to *rob* God of the honour, which may ariſe from every inſtance of thoſe two gifts being united. Some have great *hearts*, but not ability and opportunity for doing good as they deſire. Others have great *opportunites* for doing good, but they have no hearts. So that where *both* are found, piety will not *hide* or *ſhade* ſuch examples; becauſe God is greatly diſhonour'd, and the world is injur'd by doing ſo.

Yea there is a threefold *robbery*, in leſſening the regards which the world is, generally, diſpoſed to ſhew toward liberal and charitable men. God is robbed of the honour of his *Grace*, ſhining in beneficent actions: The good man himſelf is robbed of that reſpect that would be paid him, and of *that good* he might do by his inſtructions and example, were it not for prejudices rais'd againſt him: And the world is robbed of one very apt and powerful *means* of making it better.

The Concluſion.

To conclude: Let us remember that however others carry toward us, yet we ſhould

ſhould endeavour to *abound* in love, and to *encreaſe* in acts of beneficence and Charity even *unto death.*

We muſt deviſe liberal things ſo as to keep our diſtruſts and fears, by having our hearts fixed, truſting in GOD. And as our ability encreaſeth, our liberality ſhould do ſo too. We ſhould ſay of all outward enjoyments, and gifts of Providence, as *Solomon* does; "I know that there is no good in "them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do "good in his life †." By doing good in *his life*, we are to extend the meaning to his *whole life.* Nor is it meant, ſurely, that a man ſhould do good while he lives ſo as to do *no good* at *his death.* For as faith, and hope, and other graces, are to be exercis'd in *death* as well as life; (and indeed one would wiſh them the ſtrongeſt, at that awful hour;) ſo ſhould it be with Love and *Charity*, it ſhould appear in its higheſt perfection then, and our *laſt* works ſhould be our *beſt.*

No doubt they are greatly to blame, who neglect works of Charity while they *live*, becauſe they have a deſign of doing ſomething more conſiderable at their *death.* But if, with love and kindneſs, they have inured themſelves to do good during life; then the exerciſe and proof of the *ſame love* and goodwill in the laſt works that are done, will add a luſtre and crown to all the reſt.

They

† Eccleſ. iii. 12.

They that have delighted in giving alms to the *poor*, in being kind to the *miniſters* of religion, and ſupporting the worſhip of GOD, or in any other good works while they liv'd, ſhould ſhew that their love abounds ſtill more when they are *taking leave* of all. As at parting gifts are commonly diſtributed, ſo it ſhould be more eſpecially at *ſuch a parting*. Becauſe then, men carry nothing away, but thoſe good diſpoſitions which are wrought in their minds, and thoſe good works whoſe fruit ſhall follow them. The ſouls that are left bleſſing GOD for what they enjoy here on earth, and for the good they are enabled to do thro' the beneficence of their departed friends, will alſo follow in a little time to rejoice with them for ever.

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F I N I S.

The Reader is deſired to Correct the following Errors of the Preſs.

PAGE 5. line 8. for *ſhews*, read *ſhares*; p. 59. l. 9. from the bottom, for *with all*, r. *withal*; p. 125. l. 1. for *at it*, r. *at, it will*, &c. p. 153. is numbered wrong; in l. 15. for *ſuch*, r. *they*.